ERNESTO GLAESER

EL ULTIMO CIVIL

ediciones ercilla

"Los que teniamos doce años", novela de la guerra, dió a Glaeser una nombradia semejante a la de Remarque. Traducida a todos los idiomas y unánimemente celebrada por la critica, reveló a uno de los más grandes escritores alemanes de hoy.

Después, en torno de este novelista, hubo un momentáneo silencio. Sin embargo, Glaeser trabajaba. Luego hubo de salir de su patria, como tanto escritor, artista y hombre de ciencias, ante un airado gesto nazi. En el destierro, "El último civil" fué trazándose, página tras página. Y ahora afirma el nombre de este escritor entre los más grandes de su tiempo.

Glaeser nos pinta en esta obra maestra la vida de un alemán que regresa a su pais, tras prolongada ausencia, y asiste a los primeros pasos del movimiento social y politico que nuevamente le meterá en un barco, para alejarle de su tierra.

Pocos libros tan recios, tan sabiamente construidos, tan inolvidables se han escrito acerca de los hombres y las cosas de la actual Alemania. Esta versión a nuestro idioma es la primera que aparece y, sin duda, agrupará en torno de Glaeser nuevos y más fervientes admiradores.

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ERNESTO GLAESER

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(Der Letzte Zivilist)

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THE LAST CIVILIAN

ERNST GLAESER

AUTHOR OF "THE CLASS OF 1902"

THE LAST CIVILIAN

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GWENDA DAVID AND ERIC MOSBACHER

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If ever liberty disappeared from the face of the earth—which God forbid—a German dreamer would rediscover it in his dreams.

HEINRICH HEINE

BOOK ONE

CHAPTER I

THE schoolchildren were to gather in the town hall square at three o'clock in the afternoon. They came marching towards the centre of the town in long, orderly columns, crossing the bridges that traversed the valley. They were preceded by pipes and drums and they sang songs and carried paper flags bearing the colours of Württemberg and of the Republic; they marched to the beat of the drums and the music of the pipes.

Garlands and flags heightened the natural gaiety of the scene. The music and singing and youthful laughter mounted the hill, passed the church, and the façade of the baroque buildings. From the bastion at the top of the hill the countryside was to be seen lying in the ripe beauty of a lovely summer's day.

All round the city the hills soared, their vine terraces rising tier upon tier. Under the vines the earth was a deep red. The many-coloured fields stretched away into the distance like the unwinding of an endless ribbon. The fruit-laden trees stood practically motionless. The sun's light played and sparkled in the blue of the river, and the sky was cloudless and infinite.

Flags mingled with nature's own rich colours. They fluttered from the old watch-towers at the confines of the city, they flew from the pavilions at the top of the hill and along the river bank, and, in the meadow where the white periphery of the Stadium stood, they multiplied to a thick forest.

Coloured banners and streamers stretched across the bridges. Groups of gymnasts in light-coloured jerseys threaded their way through the streets. Cycling clubs, the spokes of their wheels wrapped in gaily-coloured paper, came riding in from the surround-

ing villages. Lorries, laden with wine and beer and newly-baked bread, converged upon the scene of the celebrations. Accompanying it all were the music of the bands, the singing of the children, the shouts and cries of the townsmen. The city was alive in all the vivid colour of its South German vitality, and the celebrations that were beginning were those of August 11, 1927.

The procession of children reached the square in front of the town hall. At its head marched the High School, a hundred twenty boys in white jerseys and blue knickers striding along with military precision. Two brief orders, and their ranks melted into a solid wall facing the town hall. They stood firm and motionless as one man.

The headmaster, Holzapfel, who was accompanied by two of his colleagues, ran his eye along the line.

"Stand at ease!"

The boys stood at ease and stretched their legs.

"What a marvellous day; the breeze is so refreshing," Holzapfel remarked to his colleagues.

"In the old days this would have been called Kaiser's weather," said Herr Voss.

Holzapfel blinked in the sunlight, stroked his beard and lit a cigar.

The square grew more and more crowded. The girls' high school arrived. The girls' light dresses shone like blossoms in the August sunshine.

Next came the children of the five elementary schools preceded by a musical contingent with drums, fifes, trumpets and a kettledrum.

For a long time the children stood and waited. A clock in the small tower of the town hall struck four, and suddenly a bugle rang out, and echoed three times down the valley.

The teachers took up their positions before the ranks of children, blew whistles and clapped hands to impose silence. Orders rang out. Drumsticks were held in readiness to beat a tattoo, pipes were pressed to lips. Three cannon shots thundered out from down the valley, and the flag of the Republic rose over the town hall.

The beat of the kettledrum was heard, the roll of the drums

burst forth, the trumpets pealed, the flags flew high over the ranks and the procession started moving to the sound of a rousing march.

"I shoot the stag in the wild forest." The procession of singing children turned and twisted along the shady streets of the old town like a many-coloured snake.

Below them lay the valley, shimmering in the sunlight. Boats, gaily decked out with flags, floated upon the river, and the streets were filled with music. The cannons thundered away in the mountains and the young people's singing floated over the land like a bright cloud.

Oh, Württemberg, my native land, thought Holzapfel, marching at the head of his top class, overpowered by the face of nature and the gay scene. Closing his eyes and with the sweetness of the fresh air filling his heart with gladness, and ashamed of the tears that came welling up, he sang loudly and defiantly: "And hard man though I am, I felt the force of love."

The procession of children had long since reached the valley when the mayor, followed by the town council and most of the town officials, emerged from the town hall gates into the big square. Prätorius stood still. He blinked his heavy, wrinkled eyes in the strong sunlight. He took a deep breath, but his face remained ashen-grey.

"Have arrangements been made for the streets to be clear, Dr. Kalahne," he said.

The secretary, who was standing to the left of the mayor, answered with a slight bow:

"Arrangements have been made, sir. As soon as the last column of children has entered the Stadium and taken up position a maroon will be fired as a sign that the streets are clear."

The mayor remained silent. What marvellous weather, he thought to himself. What a lovely sight.

The town councillors started getting into the buses. They took their places according to party. About fifty mounted policemen were waiting behind the bus.

The mayor, a man of fifty-five, descendant of a rich Huguenot

family, with twenty years' service to the town to his credit, a Württemberg Democrat and a friend of Friedrich Naumann, a captain of the reserves, and a university graduate in three faculties, tarried before entering his car.

"Let us wait till we hear the maroon go off," he said to Dr. Kalahne. The secretary bowed.

Prätorius walked a few paces to the right. Before his eyes lay the green of the town hall garden. He walked through the gate. Copper beeches and white poplars were dotted about the lawn. An old-fashioned, long since choked-up well, built of red sandstone, covered by some rough boards, lay in the middle of the garden. The paths were box-edged. The walls dropped a sheer eighteen yards to the Old Town below.

Prätorius looked out over the valley. He saw the flags waving in the distant Stadium. He felt ill. Should he say he couldn't go? Wasn't his heart going on strike?

But all the people down there were waiting for his speech and the opening of the new Stadium.

His speech . . . Prätorius laughed. He was afraid. "Humbug," Prätorius had said. But Prätorius had been alone. He had written ten pages in close handwriting for his speech on Constitution Day, the crowning ceremony of which was to be the inauguration of the new Stadium; and, reading through his notes that evening, he had decided that the speech he had prepared contained not one word too many and not one too few. He had felt satisfied with himself. The phrasing—the speech was written in that somewhat ceremonious German that he loved—was good. Moreover he had succeeded, or so he believed, in depicting the Constitution to the young people to whom he had to speak as it really was—the mighty heritage of liberty. Prätorius knew what these young people were like. He had observed them growing up as strangers in this new Germany, instinctively repudiating that combination of indecision, higgling and cowardice that in these days passed for politics. And no one saw more plainly than he what loss of the support of youth would entail for the new Germany. As a matter of fact, he had not many illusions left about it himself. Four years as a member of Parlia-

ment, eight years as mayor, that *via dolorosa* of disappointment after disappointment, had cured him of them. But he knew that weightier issues were at stake. He knew that what was at stake was liberty, the moral and spiritual foundation of a whole century, the dream of three generations. If that foundation collapsed a whole world would go with it, and, whatever followed, life would no longer be worth living.

That night he had sat long in his library, lost in a brown study, communing in thought with the great champions of civil freedom and humanity. And in his beloved Heine he had found this sentence, from the *Journey to England:* "If ever liberty disappeared from the face of the earth—which God forbid—a German dreamer would rediscover it in his dreams." He seized upon this phrase and determined to use it as the introduction to his speech, to console himself for the darkness that was to come.

As he was going to speak in the town's name his speech had to have the sanction of the town council. When he submitted it to them the first doubts entered his mind. One after another the representatives of the various parties had risen and politely stated what, in their opinion, it was essential that the mayor should say. The Centre had demanded a passage about the Christian school and family. The Social-Democrats had demanded an explicit avowal of pacifism and a policy of social betterment. The Workers' Party wanted an attack on the middle classes and the big stores. The syndics of the People's Party proposed that the speech should demand a repudiation of the war debts and pay a rightful tribute to private initiative in industry. But when Freiherr von Iltzenstein, commander of the Reichswehr battalion, gave him to understand through an intermediary that the Reichswehr band would be available for the ceremony only if the mayor emphasized the necessity for national defence and specifically repudiated pacifism, Prätorius took his sheets of paper, summarily threw them into a drawer of his writing-table, and entrusted Dr. Kalahne with the task of writing a new speech altogether.

Prätorius felt his heart. These last few weeks had been too much. He should have listened to the doctor and have gone to Bad

Nauheim for a cure. This shortage of breath and the slight humming in his ears was horrible.

And this morning he had had another attack. He had breakfasted as usual, in the library with Hans, who was at home for the holidays. Prätorius had never tried to influence his children's opinions. It was against his principles. But this time he had not been able to forbear reading aloud to Hans a passage from his paper, the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, which he loved. That day, in a leading article, there was an analysis of the principle of democratic responsibility, written in that fine polished German that was now so rare in the land. The article was written without a trace of literary affectation, without a trace of the high-flown journalese characteristic of leading articles, and under the inspiration of moral principles reminiscent of bourgeois culture at its best.

True democracy, the article stated, presupposed men of irreproachable spiritual standards, men of high morality and exemplary conduct. True liberty could be attained only by individual self-discipline. Only a highly educated people was ripe for democracy and self-determination. Therefore every effort should be concentrated on education, so that it should be borne in upon people from their youth up that the example of each was valid for all. That was the only way in which courage and strength—true liberty—could escape from the shackles of the primeval instincts.

The old man had been affected by these words, reminiscent of those he had imbibed at his school and in his parents' house, and as he read them a belated flush flitted across his features. But the young Prätorius had got up, gone over to his father smiling, and, contrary to all custom, stroked his hair, and said to him, almost tenderly:

"All that stuff's quite out of date nowadays, father."

The old man still saw in his mind's eye how his son had left the room. Then a helpless trembling had overcome him, and held him in its grip for several minutes.

Prätorius went on looking out over the land for a long time. Down below in the meadow the children were drawn up in white squares, waiting for him. But had he anything left to tell them?

A maroon sounded. Dr. Kalahne came into the garden. "All right," said Prätorius and went back. As he got into his car he felt giddy.

As the car entered the Stadium the children sang: "I dedicate my hand and heart, my Fatherland, to thee."

Guests of honour filled the platform to overflowing. Prätorius took his seat on the rostrum. "A glass of water," he whispered to Kalahne. A glass of water was brought.

The gymnasts drew up in the centre of the Stadium, singing. The crowd applauded, keeping time with the music. Prätorius felt beads of sweat standing out on his brow. The text of his speech was in his hand. What a loud humming there was in his ears. Was it the wind? It grew cold, everything seemed a shade darker. The music seemed to sound from far away. I'll go to bed early tonight. And tomorrow I shall take a week's leave.

Who's that speaking? Oh, yes, it's Holzapfel from the High School. What's that he's saying? Our future is in the hands of youth. Very original, my dear Holzapfel, very original of you indeed. And what's next? *Carpe diem.* Oh, *carpe diem*—use the day. Have we done that?

Prätorius wanted to shout: No! at the top of his voice, but hurrahs broke out. Prätorius leaned forward in his seat. Was it an attack? Hurrah! Hurrah! Music.

Prätorius woke up. Everything was quite close to him again. I'm ill, he said. Dr. Kalahne rose to his feet. Prätorius got up and prepared to speak. Everyone on the platform got up too. That ass Kalahne was next to him.

What are they playing now? Oh, of course, 1914. It sounded fine then. Lots of flags. Oh, stop that. What's this paper for? Oh, yes, the speech. Kalahne, a glass of water. The music has stopped. Everyone is looking at me. There is no doubt about it, it is actually I who am now making a speech. No doubt about it. And there's the town chaplain. And Iltzenstein is next to him. And there's the Stadium. How have I managed to squeeze it out of the city budget? What have I just said? Yes, there's the place. Our people is peace-loving but virile. The Treaty of Versailles is an affront

which we cannot swallow. What has that got to do with the Stadium? But Kalahne will know, of course. The Christian family, virtuous and industrious . . . that was for the Centre. Our people never would have managed without the sound and sturdy middle classes and the splendid initiative of its entrepreneurs. Away with cowardly thraldom, away with slave mentality. . . . I dedicate this Stadium in the name of our citizens and solemnly declare that I take it under my ægis for the benefit of youth, for the honour of our city, for the benefit and glory of our Fatherland. And I ask everyone, the representatives of the Church and the Army and the municipal authorities and all the citizens here joyfully assembled, and above all the young people, to join with me in the cry: Long live our beloved Fatherland. Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!

Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah! came the echo. Prätorius convulsively gripped the edge of the desk. Shadows passed disconnectedly before his eyes. He heard *"Deutschland Über Alles"* coming as if from a distance. He left the platform as soon as it was over and made his way to his car, politely smiling to right and left. "Home," he whispered, sinking into the cushions, and, as the children, delighted at the quick ending of the ceremony, hurried away to see the games and competitions in the Stadium, a gurgling sound came from Prätorius' throat, his eyes revolved in their sockets, his body rose convulsively, and he fell forward head first and struck the partition that divided the chauffeur's seat from the body of the car.

"Sir!" shouted the secretary, Dr. Kalahne. "But, sir!"

It was too late. Prätorius could no longer answer.

The festivities at the Stadium were cut short when the news of the mayor's death arrived. The flags were lowered to half-mast. Softly the bands played *I Had a Good Comrade.* The children marched back silently through the streets. The drums beat softly. The inquest was fixed for ten o'clock that night.

Next day the papers reported the cause of death as heart failure, brought on by excitement incident to a festive occasion.

The same evening there was a special session of the town council. The members listened, standing, to the oration in Prätorius' honour

spoken by Councillor Muellinger. It was unanimously resolved that Prätorius be given a public funeral. For two days his coffin stood in the town hall, wrapped in the flag of the Republic. On the third day the coffin was lowered into the grave. As the earth covered it the children sang: "So take my hand and guide me, until my death and eternally." Then men in uniform approached the grave and volleys rang out. They were repeated three times by the echo down the valley.

CHAPTER II

THE city of Siebenwasser, situated in a Rhineland valley not far from the mouth of the Neckar, has about thirty thousand inhabitants. The Old Town snuggles round a hill which dominates the valley. Its mediæval profile is still intact. The houses of the established artisans and the homes and warehouses of an extinct patrician class are circumscribed by the reddish line of the city wall, broken here and there by watch-towers and gates.

Siebenwasser, situated on the road which led north from the towns of Upper Italy by way of Augsburg and Nürnberg and linked the Hanseatic cities with the East, enjoyed a rare prosperity prior to the discovery of America and the shifting of world trade to the coastal countries. As members of the South German League of Cities her inhabitants fought with princes and peasants. One of the key cities of the country, her importance was recognized far beyond her borders. Her cheques and promissory notes enjoyed high repute, her sons were sent to Italy to study trade, and the good sense of her cosmopolitan inhabitants was as highly prized as her merchandise. In the stormy times of the Reformation the city went over decisively to the side of Protestantism. But when the peasants revolted, wishing to anticipate the Christian doctrine of freedom by realizing it on this earth, the council of the town of Siebenwasser, in alliance with the princes, hired ten companies of experienced mercenaries to put down this subversive attack on the established order of things. The Thirty Years' War dealt the town a decisive blow. Two-thirds of the population perished, by the sword or by the plague. The patrician class was exterminated. Swedes, French, Imperialists, Evangelicals—all plundered and burned alike in the name

of the Holy Trinity. When the Treaty of Westphalia was signed the city numbered barely eight hundred souls, living in about sixty houses—broken men and women and diseased children eking out a wretched existence. Siebenwasser lost her importance. The glory of her name faded. And the rats and mice, who in the past had prospered and grown fat in the city's cellars and storehouses, deserted her and fled to the fields. The city sank to the status of a little town. It fell into the hands of the Dukes of Württemberg, who exploited it for the benefit of their bureaucracy and their army. And in this way Siebenwasser slumbered through the eighteenth century.

The city was still in this condition of idyllic impotence when the French Revolution broke out. True, memories of past democratic freedom and power still lingered in the memories of a few reduced families of artisans. But nearly two hundred years of dynastic bureaucracy had dulled their souls and made their spirits servile. But in the meantime the population had increased once more to three thousand souls, and eighteen of them, all young men, revolted on the night of July 14, 1790, went to the market-place and erected a tree of freedom. Most of them, however, were captured and taken by the duke's jailers, amid popular derision, to the Hohen Asperg, where they perished. Only two managed to escape. They reached the French frontier, became soldiers and marched in the armies of the Revolution. One of them fell at Lodi. The other returned to Siebenwasser in 1809 in the guise of a high officer in the army of Napoleon and the inhabitants stared at him in his hussar's uniform as though he were a strange animal. He never mentioned the tree of freedom, but spoke only of the Emperor. Moreover, the people of Siebenwasser shared his admiration for Napoleon, who made a king of their duke. The officer and his staff stayed in the town two months. The girls succumbed to the hussars' uniforms in scores. There have been worse children than those Napoleon's troops left behind. They were known as little Napoleons. The officer never came back to Siebenwasser. He took part in the Russian campaign and shot himself in the gardens of the Palace of Fontainebleau on the night of the Emperor's abdication.

When Johann Kaspar Bäuerle was a boy nothing thrilled him more than the story of his great-uncle. Napoleon had been dead a long time, his grandfather, shot and killed by the Prussians at Rastatt in 1848, had been dead a long time too, but his great-uncle's memory did not fade. Young Johann Kaspar had often crept upstairs to the attic in the narrow, little old house which stood in the shadow of the old wall, where stood the chests his great-uncle had left. One old chest was inlaid with lead. The boy, trembling with excitement, would take out of it an old, moth-eaten uniform and hold it up to the light. How the braid glistened! How red the tassels still were! And how beautiful the tunic of yellow silk still looked. The boy would sit on the floor for a long time; sniff at the uniform, play with the tassels, caress the braid and the cord, and imagine the horsemen before him, proudly riding over the earth, splendid to look upon as they swung easily in the saddle, and, in his mind's eye he also saw his uncle, next to the little Emperor's white horse, saluting, sword in hand.

The boy spent hour after hour in this way, seated between the dusty chest and the spider-webs. His mother worked as a washerwoman for the town officials. She seldom came home before dusk, and he paid no attention when she called him. He would sit by the window and fill the gentle, peaceful-valley with brilliant uniforms, smoking barrels, waving flags. And to the shrill note of the bugle and the deafening shouting of the troops, a little man would ride by through the thin evening mist, silent as a god. Not till his father came home drunk after his day's work at the factory and started beating the dog in the kitchen would the boy creep down and draw off his father's boots.

By the year 1880 the city of Siebenwasser had been transformed by the new era of prosperity that followed the victorious war. Factories had sprung up in the valley, and railway lines ran along the river. Workmen had come from Italy and dug a tunnel through the left flank of the hill. The barracks gleamed red among the vines. An iron bridge had been built beside the old stone bridge with its dilapidated saints. The working-class district on the left bank of the river grew and grew and the surplus sons of the

peasants of the surrounding countryside lived there in narrow, badly-ventilated bedrooms and drank brandy. The local manufacturers lived in the outskirts of the surrounding woods, in villas built in the shape of mediæval castles, with embrasures, battlements and watch-towers rising from the roof.

When Kaspar Bäuerle was twelve his father got into trouble with the police. The big-boned red-haired man worked in the new furniture factory. His family could boast five generations as independent artisans. Their escutcheon dated back to times when it was impossible to hire the strength of workingmen with borrowed money, which was what the shareholders of the furniture factory were doing today. Amadeus Bäuerle looked on in despair as these new factory methods superseded the old craftsmanship. His solid, old-fashioned methods were quite unable to compete with this mechanical nimbleness. The process filled him with fury, and he fuddled himself with drink. The Bäuerles had been free artisans for centuries. No Pope, no prince had been able to tame their spirit. But now the machines had come, and the scion of an ancient house was forced to humble himself. He had to go and work in the factory. He was no longer his own master.

Amadeus Bäuerle was a man of strong family feeling. A number of framed certificates hung on the whitewashed walls of the old workshop which now served as the kitchen. One was a guild certificate, dated 1580, entitling Christian Bäuerle, master carpenter, to employ sixteen hands. Another was a document in which the Duke of Württemberg thanked a Bäuerle for delivering some "wondrously soft beds" to Belvedere, his hunting seat. There hung the master's certificates of all the Bäuerles, decaying records of a decaying race. Had not a Bäuerle died in Paris as purveyor to the king? Had not a Bäuerle travelled to St. Petersburg to select the wood for the castle of a grand prince? Had not a Bäuerle ridden in the suite of the great Emperor? There it all was on the wall; and there hung too the death announcement, framed and decorated with flowers, of that Bäuerle who fought for German freedom and was slain by the Prussians at Rastatt. Well? Wasn't that a family for you?

Whenever Bäuerle came home drunk, and that was usually on Saturday nights, he would sit down in the kitchen and stare at the certificates. He would sit like that for hours. The bedroom was next to the kitchen, and his wife and child would go to bed, and often when they woke up next morning he would still be sitting in the kitchen. And his wife would hurry off to Mass and the child would run down to the river.

The hate which devoured Amadeus was not directed at the gentlemen of the furniture factory whose competition had wiped out his independence; nor at the French, who had shot him in the leg and lamed him at Sedan, nor at the Jews to whom he owed money, nor at the priests who instigated his wife against him because he drank and claimed the immemorial privilege of the upright man to beat his wife when he did not know which way to turn. All this did not worry him in the least. He was always willing to be talked to without getting into a rage, and he would actually promise to turn over a new leaf. He would even allow himself to be talked to about his drinking. But there was one subject on which he was implacable, and that was the Prussians.

The Prussians had killed his father at Rastatt, and that same whiff-of-grapeshot prince who had had to fly to England from the fury of his people, that same man who permitted respectable citizens to be shot down, was now Emperor of all the Germans. From that day on it had been all over with the Bäuerles. That day's massacre had been the end of German freedom. These devils from the east, where no corn grew and no vine blossomed, now owned the country. They built factories which took the bread out of the mouths of honourable artisans, with their eternal talk of duty they took away all pleasure in doing nothing at all—sitting at peace in front of a full glass of wine or contemplating the river flowing between the fields. They forced decent, independent citizens into the army where they were hounded from pillar to post until nothing was left of you but a nodding automaton. They said it was better to sacrifice your life for the Kaiser than to live quietly and comfortable for yourself—and what sort of people were they? If

you went to their towns it was cold and dark and there were no flowers. If you went to their barracks the best man was he who humbled himself the quickest. And if you went to their factories they took away your tools—after shooting your father into the bargain.

So far as Amadeus was concerned the Prussians were to blame for everything. Their Emperor had killed his father. It was under their rule that this fiendish machinery had been introduced. They had Napoleon on their conscience. And the people's freedom too.

Amadeus was a drinker, but he had his ideas all the same. "It cannot be God's will that we should be ruled by these heathens," he would repeat again and again and climb to the attic, where he would put on his uncle's old uniform and preen himself before the eyes of his awe-stricken son.

The dipsomaniac Amadeus and his Prussian bogey soon became the laughing-stock of the whole town. When he left the inn rolling drunkenly, after many pints, the children would run after him, singing mockingly at the top of their voices: "The Kaiser is a good man, and he lives in Berlin. . . ." This roused the old drunkard to such a fury that he would run after the children, and, to their immense delight, topple head over heels to the ground after the first few paces. It was on an evening such as this that Amadeus, on staggering from the tap-room, ran into a number of officials just coming away from a dinner of roast hare in honour of the Kaiser's birthday. "Prussian swine!" he shouted after them. They were good Württemberg officials, and they were far fonder of roast hare than they were of the Kaiser, but the drunken and infuriated carpenter's terrific flow of words, which were overheard by the whole street, forced them to report him. The case did not last long.

"What have the Prussians done to you?" Amadeus was asked by the kindly judges.

"Their king murdered my father," Amadeus answered.

"Are you a Socialist?"

At that the carpenter flared up.

"No," he shouted, "I wouldn't dream of having anything to do with any such Prussian ideas. Socialism's the same old swindle, looked at the other way about. I'm for freedom!"

The judges shook their heads sadly and sent him to prison. His wife wept. His son's schoolmates went for the boy hammer and tongs.

"Socialist!" they shouted, and whacked him with their rulers. The teacher, Kaltenborn, came to the rescue.

"Johann," he said, "from today on you'll help me botanizing."

When Amadeus came out of prison he did not go back to the factory but sat at home and drank.

Often when in his cups he would put on the Napoleonic uniform and brandish his uncle's sword. His wife went to Mass every morning. Their child was shunned by all the neighbours. The teacher Kaltenborn went through the fields and climbed the hills with the boy, collecting specimens. His former fellow-workers from the factory, who were all Socialists, laughed at the perpetually drunken carpenter. They said he confused the Prussians with the capitalists. But they enjoyed listening to his ranting at the public house all the same. They poured brandy into his beer and shouted in chorus: "I say, Amadeus, what's all this about the Prussians?" At that Amadeus would jump to his feet, livid with alcohol, and shout: "The Prussians are a lot of professional murderers. Until they're kicked out of the country we shan't be able to live in peace!" His friends would laugh and say: "Here's your health, you backfiring son of a gun!"

Amadeus drank and went hungry. Once he walked all the way to Rastatt and lay down on his father's grave dead drunk. His terrified wife sent for the priest. The priest, a man of few words and endless patience, listened to the carpenter's ravings. As Amadeus lay down drunk on his bed and his son Johann Kaspar pulled off his boots the priest said to his curtseying wife:

"Your husband has detected the poison in the land. He must go away."

And Amadeus went away, and with him his wife and child.

Their possessions were small. There was room for them all in a wheelbarrow.

They reached New York after a fearful journey. Amadeus was ill. The first signs of delirium tremens alternated with states of fearful depression. After endless difficulties they reached the house of a relative who was descended from the Napoleonic officer and owned a small farm in the Central States. Amadeus went on cursing the Prussians for three more months. Then he got acute kidney disease. He died in a sitting position, not being able to lie down because of the pain. His relative paid for the funeral and got the widow a job in the linen room of a small hotel. Johann Kaspar stayed on at the farm. When he dreamed he dreamed of the walnut trees of Siebenwasser.

CHAPTER III

THE *Braunschweig* left New York on September 18th. She was a ship of moderate size, comfortably equipped and of a speed but little inferior to that of the ocean giants. Moreover, she was free of the atmosphere of a floating grand hotel. The strident and ostentatious tones of post-war opulence seldom strayed into her saloons. The ship was not a fashionable one, and for that reason was chosen by people who wanted peace and quiet and real comfort. Johann Kaspar Bäuerle was obliged to his doctor for the recommendation. Dr. Baker travelled in her regularly on his yearly trip to Europe, and the ship played a considerable part in his anecdotes. Baker was of Irish descent. But with his big body and short legs he could more easily have passed for a southern Frenchman. His temperament, which overflowed into his exuberant speech, suggested Mediterranean ancestry too. He would describe with special pride how his grandparents came to the States, destitute and penniless, bringing with them nothing but their freedom and their hate. Baker had been Bäuerle's doctor for twenty-five years, and the friendship between the two had withstood all the vicissitudes of life. Only during the war had they come into sharp conflict. Baker was actively pro-Irish and wanted the Germans to win. He corresponded with Roger Casement and collected money for the Irish rebels. During those years Bäuerle suffered agonies, torn between conflicting loyalties. From his father he inherited a hatred of Prussianism and all that the Kaiser stood for; it was all his father had to leave him. But that hatred could not efface his love of Württemberg, his dreams of childhood and the walnut trees of Siebenwasser. For him Germany was a country which had come under

the spell of an alien spirit and lay in chains. When Baker announced one evening over a game of chess that the Prussians were the kind of dominant race that Europe needed, Bäuerle silently left the room and refused to see his friend for several weeks. Bäuerle hailed the day on which the United States entered the war as the beginning of the liberation of Germany and the destruction of the Prussian spirit. He talked constantly of the future Republic, the centre of gravity of which would be in Southern Germany. He greeted President Wilson's decision as the birth-hour of a new Germany, as the just retribution for 1848 and those who died at Rastatt. He visualized the flag of civil freedom flying over his native land, and a new State, which would at last assure the German people the place in the world that their genius deserved, rising from the ruins of the Empire. Irene remembered how excitedly her father strode up and down the room on Armistice Day, and how he embraced Dr. Baker, when he came round for a game of chess, and exclaimed: "At last I'm a German again!"

Baker had given up his political activities after Casement's death, and sacrificed his wish for a German victory to his friendship for Bäuerle. He stayed the night in Bäuerle's house. The two men had sat up talking until early morning, and it seemed obvious to Dr. Baker that there was nothing his friend wanted so much as to go back to his native land. But Bäuerle did not go back. He stayed at his factory. Every evening he sat up making new plans. He organized committees which sent provisions and money to Germany. He talked in the clubs of the historical duty of helping Germany. He tried to influence newspapers, and arranged garden fêtes at which he pleaded for all possible moral and financial support for the new Germany.

Help the Republic! Be generous in your victory! For it is not Germany you have beaten but a caricature of Germany, was his refrain.

Bäuerle found little response. People gave a few dollars for starving German children, and applauded Bäuerle's speeches, but now the war was over they took little interest in all this European business. They wanted to enjoy life again. The French would

reduce Europe to order, and they had had enough excitement about Germany to last them a long time. It was time now for the Germans to leave them in peace and be grateful that their country had not been reduced to rack and ruin as it deserved.

Bäuerle fought a desperate struggle against the Treaty of Versailles. He formed a society for the purpose and bought a newspaper in which he issued passionate warnings against treating Germany as a conquered nation. The opportunity had come at last to make the country a country of peace, he declared, by demonstrating to it by deeds that spoke far stronger than words that the struggle had been against Prussian militarism only. The failure of this newspaper cost Bäuerle fifty thousand dollars. The society collapsed. People were not interested in Europe.

On receiving the German Consul-General's report on Bäuerle a Foreign Office official in Berlin wrote: "Prussian-hater; democrat with Utopian ideas; owns an ice-factory in Baltimore; descended from 1848 family; politically insignificant; coming here for Red Cross or children's welfare work at most."

Irene had gone to bed soon after supper. The preparations for the journey, the departure from Baltimore, the first few hours in the ocean breeze had made her tired. Her father took her to her cabin, then kissed her hand and said he was going back to the smoking room for another half-hour. Irene smiled. She knew that this half-hour would last half the night. But she was glad he was so brisk and cheerful and had got over the strain of parting so well. Irene did not like to see men embrace, but when Baker and her father fell into each other's arms, muttering stupid phrases to each other, she had turned away because her eyes were full of tears.

She knew full well what her father was giving up in leaving the States and going back to Germany. He had been fussing about his plans for a whole year. All his friends had attempted to dissuade him, but his determination had grown more and more. It was touching to watch this man of fifty-seven falling more and more in love with his youth. In all seriousness he had decided to leave

Baltimore and go home, as he put it. At the word "home" his eyes would light up and his speech tend to become unintelligible. His friends called him a fool. Was he, in the evening of his days, to tie himself to the fate of a country he had not seen for forty-five years? But Bäuerle threw all objections to the winds. Now that the spirit for which his father suffered was at last supreme in Germany, he must go back. Now the great hour of the German people had struck, and he must be there to see. Quietly he made his preparations for departure. He turned his business into a limited company, retaining the majority of the stock. He found a manager to whom he gave full control after a trial period of six months, and retired from active participation in the business. He valued his property and found that in spite of some losses he was still very rich. He obtained a large-scale map of Siebenwasser and tried, with Irene's help, to find a site to build a house on. He studied Germany's new Constitution and remarked that nowhere else in the world was so much freedom to be found. It made him proud to be a German.

Irene loved her father's craziness. She sat up whole nights with him, listening to his talk. The prudent, hard-headed business man, renowned throughout Baltimore for his cool head, grew more and more excited as he talked of the Neckar, of the woods and the red round villages in the valleys, and lauded the towns and the hills on which the vines grew. He sang songs to Irene, played to her clumsily on the harmonium and tears came into his eyes when he spoke of his schooldays, of his botanical specimen boxes and of catching the salamander.

Irene's happiness was her father's happiness. Her father was the one human being after whose pattern she moulded herself.

There was the time, almost a year ago, when she had come home, drenched to the skin, and found her father standing by the door, where he had been waiting for her all night. Florence had fetched her during the afternoon to go for a drive in her Buick. On the way they picked up young Brand and young Taler, and they had driven a long way, right down to the sea. The young men had brought a gramophone, and they had bathed and lain in the sand

dunes. They drank gin and Florence said that it had to happen some time. Then Florence disappeared among the dunes with Taler. Evening came on and they did not come back. Irene was sitting behind a broom-bush with Brand. They played the gramophone. Irene wondered where Florence could be. Brand laughed, and said he supposed she wasn't in a hurry, she liked Taler. Irene said nothing and when it was quite dark Brand stopped the gramophone. We're a couple of fools, he said. Irene implored him to drive her home. Her father would be expecting her, and she hadn't told him she was going to be late. Brand walked a little way with her through the dunes. Was she still a girl? he asked. Irene quickened her pace. It would be very stupid if she were, Brand said. What did she gain by it? Irene started running. Brand's ardent voice kept pace with her. I've had my eye on you for a long time, and you needn't be frightened of me, he said, I'm not like most of the fellows at the tennis club. Irene went on running. Just this once, Brand implored. They reached the end of the dunes. Irene could see the lights of the broad motor road. Brand seized her and pulled her down.

"Father!" Irene screamed. "Father!"

The powerful headlights of a fast approaching car caused Brand to let her go. Silly cat, he said.

They walked over to the car. Florence was standing next to it. Next to her was Taler, with a tired smile on his face.

"Was it nice, darling?" Florence asked.

Irene climbed into the car. Florence sat beside her. Irene did not speak. Florence hummed a tune.

On the way home they were overtaken by a sudden storm. Taler stopped the car. The downpour made it impossible to see.

After they had waited for a time Florence said she felt bored. She crept in front beside Taler, and Brand sat next to Irene. Taler switched off the light.

Irene sat rigid. Her eyes were glued to the illuminated clock on the dashboard. She saw Florence in Taler's arms. She felt Brand close to her and heard him say: Don't be a little fool.

He started stroking her shoulder. She felt his breath. Am I an

animal? Irene thought to herself. The man's hand touched her neck and Florence and Taler in front were in a close embrace. Irene opened her bag and felt for her mother-of-pearl revolver and started counting . . . twenty-one, twenty-two, twenty-three . . . and then she pulled the trigger.

There was a sharp report.

Irene felt the hand sink from her neck. She put the revolver back in her bag. She felt perfectly calm. She got out of the car. It was raining heavily. A flash of lightning illuminated the chromium-plated radiator. She heard Florence shrieking her name. She started running as fast as she could. No one followed her.

Half an hour later she found a tiny inn, where she had a cup of tea. The proprietress offered to dry her clothes. Irene refused and asked for a car.

She reached her father's house an hour later. She was wet through. The light in the garden was on. It was still raining, but there was her father, standing under the light.

Irene walked up the gravel path. She felt frozen inside.

"Irene!" exclaimed Bäuerle, running down the steps.

"I'm not an animal!" answered Irene and fainted.

Her father carried her into the house.

Fräulein Meyschutz came hurrying along with tea and brandy.

Irene sat erect in front of her father, the rain dripping from her clothes.

The storm raged over Baltimore.

In Irene's cabin there was a picture of a dense wood, with tangled, intertwining branches and great roots heaving up the soil. In the centre of the scene there was a spring, overgrown with moss, and near it lay a young man, in the garments of a scholar, with a drinking horn raised to his lips. You could almost feel the coolness of the drink, which made him smile with pleasure.

Irene stood naked staring at the picture. She pressed her hips lightly with her thumbs. Her bronzed skin glowed in the artificial light and her mass of dark hair swept boldly across her brow.

She had known this picture since her childhood. It had hung

over the little fireplace in her father's room. How often had she sat gazing up at it in the firelight, listening to the story her father was reading aloud. She never tired of the story of the Seven Kids; and whenever she asked her father where it was that all these things happened, where it was that the Frog-King lived, and Fallada, the Wonderful Horse, he would always point to the picture and answer: in Germany, in the fairy wood. These fairy stories caught the child's imagination again and again. She followed passionately the story of the fate of the simple people who wished to do good, but were constantly thwarted by bad kings, witches and sorcerers and suffered nothing but adversity and oppression. And it seemed to her waking senses that nowhere else could people reach such heights, of either good or evil, as in the country called Germany. Often, when her father had finished the story and the bad king had been put to flight and the wicked witch committed to the flames and the evil sorcerer drowned in the lake, Irene yearned for the beautiful young man in the picture to come to life and take her away into the wood. And occasionally she found her father sunk deep in thought before the picture too. He often promised to take the child to Germany, to this very wood and this very spring. On the night she ran away from her friend Florence and the young men, he led her to the picture and told her they were going to Germany and that he was going to buy an estate there with many acres of fields and woods, where Irene could grow into a woman, far away from people like Florence and bad millionaires' sons. At that moment the young man in the picture seemed to move and greet her with a smile.

Irene crept into bed. She switched off the light and switched on the bed-lamp. She opened a red-bound book, on the cover of which "Württemberg" was stamped in gold letters. Irene read:

"Siebenwasser, one of the old Free Cities of Germany, lies on the Neckar, Germany's most gentle river. It is surrounded by heavily wooded hills, the light beech tree predominating. At this point the valley of the Neckar broadens towards the south. Vineyards begin here, and the character of the inhabitants is cheerful

and industrious. Since the beginning of the century the importance of Siebenwasser has grown steadily. It is the seat of a number of important industries—engineering, and canning. Industrialization has not affected the city's charm. Its true South German character remains unaffected. The origins of this vivacious little city date back to the eighth century. According to tradition, the heroic resistance of seven sons of a certain knight in a small valley in the neighbourhood held up the advance of the invading Huns until the population of the surrounding countryside had time to take refuge in the neighbouring fortress, all traces of which have now disappeared. After a two-day battle the seven fell, due to the treachery of a shepherd. Nevertheless, the Huns retreated, dismayed by this desperate resistance. When the seven heroes were found long red rivers of blood were said to have flowed from their bodies for many days. And when at last they buried them seven springs are said to have sprung from their graves. A city was built in their honour and called Seven Waters."

Irene closed the book. She smiled up at the picture on the wall and turned off the light. The wooden walls of the cabin trembled almost imperceptibly from the vibration of the ship's engines.

The *Braunschweig* had passed the twelve-mile limit when Johann Kaspar entered the smoking room. He found a free table in the left-hand corner, close to the library. He sat down under a standard lamp and summoned a steward.

"I want a wine," Bäuerle said. "A real German wine. I haven't been over for forty-five years."

The steward handed him the wine list with a smile.

Bäuerle put on his glasses and solemnly ran his eye down the page.

He had not touched wine for many years. Occasionally Baker had brought along a small bottle of Mexican wine when he had come round for a game of chess; but this drink was too heavy and too characterless for Johann Kaspar. In earlier years, when Juana was still alive, they had often sat on the terrace in the evening eating nuts and drinking white burgundy, which was her

favourite, while Juana told stories and legends of Mexico and its people.

Bäuerle half-closed his eyes beneath his spectacles.

Thoughts of Juana had occurred to him too many times that day. It was only three days since he had visited her grave. He had sat quietly on the seat, looking at the Japanese dwarf-trees growing between the white slabs. He had talked aloud and felt no shame of the people passing by. He told Juana he was going back to Germany and taking Irene with him. He asked her not to take it amiss that he was leaving her. She had found peace, and he wanted to find it too before he died, and in Siebenwasser, his birthplace. Irene would grow up in the home of his fathers, in a Germany which had at last found its freedom. That was where the two of them would live. After forty-five years of homesickness he was going back to where he had begun. Juana need have no concern. The child was thriving, and his eye was constantly upon her. Bäuerle wrote "Farewell" on the corner of the white stone cross when he left the grave-side and, before leaving the cemetery, paid the fee for the upkeep of the grave for five years in advance.

Bäuerle couldn't find his way about the wine list. He read the names of the wine out half-aloud in order to banish thoughts of Juana, but apart from sounds they meant little to him. "Schwarzer Herrgott—Saumagen—100 Morgen—Schwarze Katze—Eselspad—Törichte Jungfrauen—" Johann Kaspar turned to the steward in confusion.

"If I might advise you, sir," the steward said, "I'd take a bottle of Verziger Schwarzlay."

Bäuerle nodded. The steward brought the bottle, and poured out the golden wine. The ship sailed calmly on. The sea lay smooth under the soft light of the moon.

I'm going home, Johann Kaspar Bäuerle said to himself.

He shut his eyes. The wine coursed powerfully through his blood.

The night he came to Princetown had been a cold one. Rain had been falling, mixed with snow, as he left the station. Johann

Kaspar had held his case between his legs and in the dim light of the station lamp tried to decipher what was written on the piece of paper his uncle had given him. Miss Dorpfield, he made out, 119 Washington Street. Johann Kaspar walked through the badly lighted town in the rain. It was absolutely essential to find Miss Dorpfield, because that was where he was going to live. His board and lodging had been paid for a month in advance. That was all his uncle had been able to do for him after the failure of the harvest. And his mother was dead. She had left him thirty dollars. Johann Kaspar carried them in a little bag on his chest.

The address he sought was in the factory district. It was a shack which Miss Dorpfield had divided into four rooms by erecting wooden partitions. A smell of sage and camomile greeted Johann Kaspar as he entered. Miss Dorpfield was sitting in the kitchen with a swollen cheek. Her face was covered with black veils, which made her look like a widow in the first month of mourning; under the veils damp poultices were perceptible.

Johann Kaspar was shown one of the partitioned-off compartments. It contained a mattress, a chair and a tiny wash-basin. The room was six paces long and three paces across. It possessed one broken window, and half of it was stuffed with cardboard.

Three workmen from the neighbouring rolling mill also lived in the shack. Miss Dorpfield cooked, ate and slept in the kitchen. Her niece made the beds. She was hunch-backed, red-haired and had inflamed eyes. Three days later Bäuerle found work at the rolling mill. Five dollars a week sufficed for his lodging and meagre board. He was eighteen years old. The other workmen did not take to him. He never went to their saloons, and neither drank nor smoked. When the day's work was done he went back to his room and read. Miss Dorpfield invited him to tea in the kitchen several times, but Johann Kaspar stayed in his room and applied himself to studying certain heating problems he had come across in the course of his work at the mill. After working at the mill for two months he applied for an interview with his chief, a violent Irishman who was popular with the management because of his drive. He had been shot at on his way home at night no

fewer than three times during the recent winter, each time by an unknown hand. The effect these slight contretemps had on him was to make him more brutal than ever at the works. He had no hesitation in striking the workers; moreover, he did it with an iron bar. He was perpetually drunk, and when he was wanted by the management he would rinse his mouth out with antiseptic. He liked Johann Kaspar very much. He called him "Sonnie" and when he was drunk he always said the lad reminded him of his own son, who had died of consumption three years before.

I must do something special, Johann Kaspar said to himself when he started work at the rolling mill. Although he was poor, he felt no solidarity with his fellow-workers. Each man thought of himself first. The only thing that ever united them for a short time was want. Bäuerle shuddered at the thought of working year in and year out in this factory, with nothing to look forward to but the brandy bottle at the end of his days. Even if he grew to be a manager, he would be left with the same sense of desolation. Whether one earned twenty dollars or fifty dollars a week made no difference. Life began only when one no longer had to count the dollars.

The first time in his life Johann Kaspar went into a saloon was with his chief. He drank beer and gin. He described his plans and talked at the man hard and offered him fifty per cent, but the man only got drunk and shook his head. "Young man," he said, "I don't want your money and I don't understand a word you're saying. But if anyone manages to get out of here and make a lot of dollars without turning crooked, all drinks in this saloon will be free for two days and I'll pay for them, but I bet three whiskies nobody does it."

"I'm going to get out of here," Johann Kaspar said, and his chief laughed and said:

"Well, when you do, don't forget the poor devils you leave behind you."

They both got fearfully drunk and Johann Kaspar's chief ended up by kissing him. After that they went along to the girls who lived in the fourth shack, and there Kaspar's chief had a crying

fit from the excess of liquor he had taken, went blue in the face and lay across the bed like a log, quietly mumbling to himself. Johann Kaspar picked the drunken man up and carried him back to his shack where he was brought round with the help of Miss Dorpfield's tea. The man spent the night with Bäuerle and took him to see the management next morning. Two days later the extra hand, Johann Kaspar Bäuerle, was put in charge of a heating research department. First of all they worked on the big pipe connecting the machine-room with shop No. 1. The directors were prepared to buy the invention outright if the experiments proved successful. Bäuerle's object was to reduce the loss of heat from the pipes and boilers to a negligible percentage by a system of insulation. Bäuerle and his men worked hard for a fortnight. The first test surpassed all expectations. The factory hurriedly bought the patent. Johann Kaspar left Princetown with five hundred dollars in his pocket. He went south and attended a technical school.

That was in 1890, Bäuerle said to himself, lifting his glass. The years he had lived rose before him, years of isolation in the callous loneliness of American towns spent in cold lodging-houses and malodorous fried fish shops and lecture halls and laboratories. He had had no friendships and no love to support him. One thing sustained him only, and that was the thought of money.

The battle for the dollar raged all round him. He observed the shouting and the tumult from day to day, from hour to hour, in town and street and chamber, with its medley of guile and passion and calculation. And it seemed to him that every decent human feeling must be stifled in this intoxicating but poisoned atmosphere. When we're rich we'll be righteous, seemed to be the only thing these people had to bring forward in self-defence when they looked back on the stricken lives and poisoned souls and recklessly obliterated human beings that strewed their path. Johann Kaspar lived in the slums for a year on his five hundred dollars. He was twenty years old and had no illusions left about people.

Mr. Thompson laughed the first time the badly-dressed young man who called himself an engineer called on him. It was utterly

absurd to suggest that you could make ice artificially with some kind of machine. Thompson was the proprietor of a soda water factory, and his strongest desire was for the sun to shine as long and as fiercely as possible. When the streets were dust-strewn and people collapsed because of the heat, he positively rejoiced. But he was up against one difficulty—the confounded problem of ice. He had hired a number of deep vaults for the summer to keep his bottles moderately cool, but that wasn't good enough. And now this fellow came along with an idea which promised to put an end to his difficulties once and for all. Mr. Thompson looked Johann Kaspar up and down. The fellow didn't look so bad, in spite of his clothes.

"How soon could you deliver the machines?" Thompson asked, glancing through the plans, which meant nothing whatever to him.

"They could be working in two months' time," answered Bäuerle.

That would be March, just the right time, Thompson said to himself.

"How much money do you want?"

"Fifteen hundred dollars," said Johann Kaspar Bäuerle.

Thompson thought it over. Fifteen hundred dollars was a lot of money. Was he to hand it over to a fellow who blew in from God knows where and promised a miracle? Or had fate sent him a heaven-sent opportunity? Mr. Thompson vacillated. Fifteen hundred dollars was the exact amount he had paid out day before yesterday to settle his son's debts. The money had gone on women and wine—just chucked away. Young good-for-nothing, Mr. Thompson said to himself. The young man in front of him didn't make a bad impression at all. He looked a little fanatical and under-nourished, it is true, but serious and genuine. And there was the letter in which the proprietors of the rolling mill confirmed the young man's story of having installed a successful heat insulation system. Not bad. And the young man is twenty years old. He thought of his own stripling. I'll show him what a lad of his age can do.

"All right," said Mr. Thompson. "You can start tomorrow. I'll buy the idea."

Two months later Thompson's ice carts invaded the roads of the States and the dollars were piling up in thousands in Mr. Thompson's bank. Six months later Bäuerle was sacked. The ice machines went by themselves. After all, the man is superfluous now, Mr. Thompson said to himself.

Johann Kaspar summoned the steward and ordered a second bottle. It was ten o'clock, and the people in the smoking-room were quiet. The boat was speeding along. Bäuerle contemplated his past life.

That journey from the Southern States to the North, in autumn, was hard. His total profit from the Thompson deal had been a bare one hundred dollars. He carried them next to his chest, with the thirty left him by his mother. Johann Kaspar went on foot. Sometimes he managed to hide in a freight train and travel that way. Winter came and the roads were blocked. The farmers huddled in their houses, drank, and watched over their wives. Johann Kaspar earned his food, lodging and expenses by repairing broken machinery in the little towns and villages through which he passed. He was determined to get to New York. He was also determined to make money by hook or by crook. Twice he had been cheated, twice he had been taken advantage of. He was determined to get his own back next time. Shortly before Christmas he arrived at his uncle's farm. The old man was ill. A negro woman was looking after him. There was no one else on the farm. The cattle had been sold and in some of the rooms the furniture was missing.

"This is the end," his uncle said, sitting up in bed, full of aches and pains. "The end of me and of the farm too. The last wheat crop upset everything, and then there was a hoof-and-mouth epidemic on top of it. Everything you see round you belongs to Larousse."

"Who is Larousse?" asked Johann Kaspar.

"A New York money-lender. A crook."

Johann Kaspar stayed at the farm for a week. His uncle gave him the Cross of the Legion of Honour before he died.

"That's the only thing I've got left. My father wore it under Napoleon. That is all that is left of the Bäuerles."

Johann Kaspar buried his uncle under the copper-beech tree. Now he was utterly alone in the world.

Bäuerle walked for two days and two nights. He did not stop in any of the villages to look for work. When he wanted a few hours' sleep he would creep into a barn or a shed. He spent one dollar on bread and cheese, and that was his only sustenance. He found New York in a state of frenzy. In every church Johann Kaspar entered to try to get warm the clergyman was extolling the birth of the new century. The streets re-echoed with explosions and reports, rockets ascended from the roofs and cast a glow over the sky, the howling of ships' sirens mingled with the ringing of the church bells, strangers embraced and danced in restaurants and saloons, drunks bawled, the Salvation Army beat their drums and cries of repentance of saved sinners ascended to heaven from the missions and the chapels.

Johann Kaspar, carrying his bag, managed to force his way through the throng to a small hotel. He ordered a large pot of coffee to last him through the night, and put his small drawing board, his tables, his plans, his ruler and compass on the table. He did not hear the row going on outside on the stairs, or the curses of the drunks, or the whisperings of couples in the bedrooms. He just went on working. For eight days and eight nights he sat over his plans. He lived on bread and coffee. During all that time he scarcely spoke a word to any human being.

When he left the hotel he bought a newspaper. He read it standing in the street. A huge advertisement caught his eye. NATURE CONQUERED BY THOMPSON'S ICE MACHINES. LONG LIVE THE TWENTIETH CENTURY! Bäuerle flung the paper away and laughed. He had in his pocket a plan five times as efficient as the one Thompson had defrauded him of.

Then he went to see Larousse.

Johann Kaspar found Mr. Larousse at his morning prayers. He was standing in his little office, surrounded by his staff, reading a

psalm. Demand forms, interest tables, letters threatening proceedings and judgment summonses were strewn on his desk.

Bäuerle stood behind him, unnoticed. When the prayers were over the old man vanished behind a door marked "private" without looking round. Bäuerle handed the Cross of the Legion of Honour to an office boy and said he wanted to talk to Mr. Larousse. The door burst open and the old man with the little grey cap on his head came rushing out with wide-open arms. "Son of my native land!" he exclaimed, clasping Johann Kaspar tightly to his bosom. In his private office Bäuerle told him who he was. Larousse bit his lip.

"I could not help your uncle. The price of wheat has fallen heavily and I had to see my money some time."

Johann Kaspar said he understood all that perfectly. Then he laid his plans on the table. He told Larousse all about Thompson. Larousse rang the bell and gave orders that he was not to be disturbed for an hour. The hour lasted the whole morning. The same evening Larousse and Bäuerle met again in a quiet restaurant. Larousse was accompanied by a man who introduced himself as an engineer. He spent a long time examining the plans. The two parted after midnight. Next morning the firm of Larousse and Bäuerle, ice manufacturers and suppliers of heating apparatus, was founded. Bäuerle went to Baltimore and bought two empty buildings. A month later his factory got going. The first ice-carts were on the streets in May. Bäuerle devised weather-proof ice carts. By the autumn he was employing four hundred men. Bäuerle lived as simply as he had before. He put every cent aside. His agreement gave him the option of buying out Larousse after two years with double the sum he had put into the business. In June, 1902, Johann Kaspar Bäuerle became sole proprietor.

Larousse went back to France and bought a farm near Orleans. When he died he left two hundred fifty thousand francs to the Church.

Bäuerle grew rich. In 1905 he bought Mr. Thompson's factory. He retained its old name; the dollars were enough for him.

When his fortune reached the million mark he took his first

holiday. He went to Mexico. He was young and full of energy. He defeated all opposition. He shrank at nothing.

In all those years he had not thought of Germany. It was only on the occasions when he had to fill out an official form that he remembered he was born at Siebenwasser. Each time the thought amused him. Oh, dear, those backward people and those narrow little streets.

He was bored as he sat in the train on the way to Mexico. The doctor had forbidden him to have anything to do with business for four weeks and advised him to occupy himself with some hobby, or if this didn't suit him, just to do nothing at all and give himself up to the mood of the moment. Bäuerle had kicked hard at first, but slight heart attacks eventually forced him to give in. With your constitution you'll get rid of them in a fortnight, the doctor had said, and Bäuerle had gone to Mexico. That was in 1908, the man on the *Braunschweig* said to himself.

After sailing through the Gulf, Johann Kaspar Bäuerle reached Vera Cruz one evening and went ashore. It was one of those remarkable summer nights when the vault of heaven is strewn with stars and the trees and bushes lie motionless in the ghostly light. Johann Kaspar sat on the terrace of his hotel. He had nothing to do and nothing to think about. The wine he drank was light and the sounds that drifted up from the town were lost among the palms. Bäuerle had intended to go up-country next morning. One of his agents had recommended him a hacienda not far from Mexico City which took paying guests. Johann Kaspar was in doubt whether to go or not. Most of all he would have liked to go back to Baltimore, but that would have conflicted with his purpose. But there was no reason why he shouldn't change his plans. For instance, he could stay here and sit on the terrace every evening. It didn't matter much where he wasted his time. Had they installed that new machinery in Baltimore yet?

It must have been just about nine o'clock when I got up, meaning to go down to the harbour, Bäuerle said to himself. I went up to my room to fetch my overcoat, as it was a cool night, and on my way downstairs again I remembered I'd left my cigarette case

on the terrace. It was the only thing I had to remind me of my father. It was a plain, leather thing, not worth fifty cents. But I kept it because my father's monogram was on it. It was my mother's engagement present to him. I certainly wasn't a sentimental person, particularly at that time, when I knew what an obstacle such feelings could be. But I went back to fetch it.

The man on the *Braunschweig* smiled.

In his mind's eye he saw young Johann Kaspar Bäuerle walking irritably through the lounge of the hotel at Vera Cruz. He saw him hurry up the steps to the terrace, look for the table and then stop. The table was occupied.

He was about to turn away when he saw the cigarette case. A man obviously Spanish, was sitting at the table, with a young woman next to him. She had the case in her hand, and she had opened it. She was reading something aloud, and the man was listening. Siebenwasser, to my betrothed, he heard her say. She mispronounced the words in a most delightful manner. What Bäuerle felt at that moment was more than pleasure in an unexpected situation. The word Siebenwasser seemed yoked to that young woman's voice. With what charm, what music did she say it. In a flash Johann Kaspar saw before him his father's house, the dark workshop, the attic with its spider-webs and the Napoleonic uniform, and his mother in the kitchen and the walnut trees in the yard; and he saw the river and the bastion and the wood up on the hill, and the roundabout in the market-place and the church tower and the birches in front of the tower at Whitsuntide; and the meadows, the many green meadows, and behind them the vineyards on the hills.

He stood in front of the table, inarticulate. There was a singing in his ears. He bowed. Juana had the case in her hand.

The man on the *Braunschweig* sat rigid. He held the scene firmly in his mind, infused it with all the light of his inner eye. There sat Juana, confused, looking as lovely as that summer night in Vera Cruz, and there sat her father, smiling and politely reserved, and there stood he, Johann Kaspar Bäuerle, stammering like an idiot. Her father rose to his feet. He spoke careful English.

And Juana held out the case, and her father asked him to take a seat. They were interested in the town with the name of Siebenwasser. Johann Kaspar sat down.

The man on the *Braunschweig* filled his glass. He went on looking steadily at the scene. He saw young Johann Kaspar suddenly get his tongue back. He heard him talk, of Siebenwasser and of his father and of the Prussians, of their emigration and the years on the farm, of his mother's death while handing out the hotel laundry, of the rolling mill and his chief, of his heat insulation experiments and his first apparatus, and what a rogue Thompson was, and how Larousse gave up everything to go back to France and retire to a small farm near Orleans, leaving him to exploit a colossal opportunity all by himself, and how he had built up his factory. And now here he was in Mexico, and he didn't know what to do with himself. What a gift of gab he had that night; not at all like the Bäuerles, who were jealous of every word. But Juana was looking at him, and he had to go on talking, otherwise he would have been done for.

And next day we went to Mexico City and Juana's father, a professor of geology, took me with him on an expedition. And Juana came too. For a fortnight we scarcely saw each other or spoke, but I gave her the cigarette case, and now Irene's got it.

The man on the *Braunschweig* sat perfectly still in front of his wine.

"And then life began for the first time," Johann Kaspar Bäuerle said aloud to himself.

They were to be married in the spring; Bäuerle returned to Baltimore for the winter. His business prospered, but the attention he paid to it was the minimum its efficiency demanded. He spent the greater part of the day writing letters to Juana or waiting for her replies. It was as if the floodgates inside him had opened. He pined for Juana, and hated Baltimore because she was not in it. He scarcely left the room in which her photograph hung, and would often sit up all night before it. And Juana wrote, and her writing was as pretty as her eyelashes. She wrote that she loved him and yearned for nothing but to be his.

The wedding took place in Mexico. When Juana knelt before the altar and the choir burst into song Johann Kaspar had not yet kissed her. The rich man bowed before convention with the submissiveness of a child. Juana was as pure as a dove when he took her from her parents' house and the hands of the priest. Then the intoxication of love enfolded them both. They spent six weeks on a hacienda in the interior. How the world opened to him! Johann Kaspar, confronted by Juana, soon learnt the emptiness of his past life. He had hunted the dollar and captured his share of worldly goods, but the world changed for him under Juana's spell. This woman's deep, dark blood awakened depths in him which, in the easy optimism of his American success, he had never suspected. He saw into the life of the Indians, Juana's mother's people. Juana led him through the ruins of a destroyed civilization, showed him the traces of the brutal conqueror, and the grass which grew over the temple soon became for him the symbol of human guilt and helplessness in the face of sin. The two loved each other, but there was pain in all their love. In all Juana's embraces there was an undertone of grief for the transcience, the eternal unpreparedness of man, as she called it. She always cried in the moment of ecstasy.

Johann Kaspar built a house. It was autumn when they moved into it. And Juana lived in Baltimore. All her life was bound up with her love for this man, who was fair and good and a little crazy in his tenderness. Her blood yearned for him. And time stood still when she lay in his arms.

Their love was mutual. They gave themselves to each other with every word. Johann Kaspar began to think. He forgot the dollars, which now accumulated by themselves. With Juana he explored the world of books. The eternal world of the spirit blossomed forth for him. Thanks to her father, Juana's education had given her a judicious balance between the intellectual and the sensuous. She led her love through the forest of humanity and she showed him the country beyond the domain of dollars. Johann Kaspar was an eager student. He thrived with Juana.

The man on the *Braunschweig* remained motionless. One scene after another rose pitilessly before him. He sat staring wide-eyed

into the realm of his past life. And he re-lived that afternoon when Juana fainted in the garden, just where her favourite Japanese dwarf-trees stood. He saw her white, drawn face. He saw the ambulance come to take her away, and himself following in the car, and the corridors of the hospital and the nurses' nodding caps, and the numbers on the doors and the brutal white of the operating room. And he saw the doctor walking past, and himself sitting in the waiting-room, drinking one glass of water after another without noticing it.

They had come for him, and spoken no word. He went alone into the room where Juana lay. He kissed her convulsed mouth. He kissed the perspiration of the last hour from her brow. He did it all quite mechanically. No one disturbed him when he uncovered her and caressed the cool curves of her body. No one disturbed him when he tried to open the dead mouth and breath his breath into the beloved flesh.

They had come for him and found him lying mute beside the corpse, holding its arm and stroking it. They led him gently away. They told him he had a child, a little girl.

At this he stopped still in the corridor and shook his head.

"Life is dead for me," he said, and went away.

The man on the *Braunschweig* raised his glass.

Here's to you, friend Baker! Without you I'd have made an end of it there and then. It was you who brought the child and came to my house and took possession of a room and installed the child in it with a nurse. And then you came to me. On the most difficult night of my life you did not move from my side. And in the morning you showed me the child, and told me that it was man's duty to overcome death by life. Here's to you, friend Baker!

With the tender sadness of a man to whom much had been granted and little spared, Johann Kaspar thought of his beloved friend, and of the months and years when Irene had been growing up, and her father had been becoming a full-fledged man for the first time, or so it seemed to him. He had loved Juana, and Irene had been born of that love. His feelings for the child, who resembled Juana more and more, expanded into a deep, still accep-

tance of all humanity. He saw beyond the funeral pyre which had nearly consumed him in its flames, and detected in the child the working of the remorseless law of everlasting change, in face of which all grief was out of place. He went about his business earnestly. He did what lay before him, and did it conscientiously. During those years he read many books, and found that in comparison with the austere dignity with which men had endured the incomprehensibility of fate for thousands of years, they had complained but little.

Then came the war, and the world suddenly took on a different aspect. Individuals disappeared in the tempest, peoples took their place. Never had Johann Kaspar felt so German as at that time. His father and mother and the houses of Siebenwasser stood out clearly again in his mind. The kernel of his youth broke through the outer shell of his later life. He plunged back into the battles of the past, and felt the hollowness of his Americanism. From the blood of his father that coursed through his veins there sprang to life a violent hatred of the Prussians and an unbounded love for his native land. Were not his tenderest roots in Siebenwasser and Württemberg?

And then that night, in 1926, when his daughter came home drenched to the skin and deeply hurt, he told her again of his youth in Germany, and said that now his people had cleansed themselves of the poison of the past century, now that Germany had the freest Constitution in the world he wanted to go back. He had studied the little book on the German Constitution carefully and it seemed to him that the dreams of those who had perished and suffered on the bitter paths of persecution and emigration were being fulfilled. Those who died at Rastatt seemed to have been resurrected as the patriots of the newly-united people.

Johann Kaspar Bäuerle sat on the *Braunschweig*, the bottle of wine before him. The *Braunschweig* was a good ship. The wine crept softly through his senses. The moon shone serenely over the sea. Johann Kaspar felt grateful and at peace. Already the walnut trees of Siebenwasser were before his eyes, and the vineyards and the fields. . . .

CHAPTER IV

A FORTNIGHT after Prätorius's death Siebenwasser was the scene of a horrifying scandal. The occasion was the reopening of the municipal theatre. The theatre superintendent, Bringolf, had caused the season to open a few weeks earlier than usual. The persistence of fine weather had adversely affected his tour of the spas. As he was responsible for the arrears of salaries and taxes which had been mounting up, he preferred to break off the tour on the first indication of a deficit and return to Siebenwasser. Nevertheless, his obligations were sufficiently high for him to be compelled to look round for something to indemnify him. He talked it all over at length with Kalahne.

Kalahne and Bringolf had been students at Tübingen together. They came from the same village, in the Rauhen Alb. They had been playmates in infancy and friends at school. From his earliest youth Kalahne, son of a humble peasant, had used his mental superiority over Bringolf, the teacher's son, to make of him a highly useful friend. With the help of sturdy young Bringolf the small, red-haired, weak Kalahne had managed to keep his end up with the village boys who jeered at him because he limped. In the village he was looked upon as an oddity, and gossips even whispered that he was a cuckoo's egg that a passing dealer had bequeathed to old Kalahne's nest. Although old Kalahne went to law about it several times the rumour was not stilled. Its origin was as mysterious and obscure as was that of the Kalahnes themselves. They had settled in the Rauhen Alb as refugees after the Russian invasion of East Prussia, and their ways and their speech never allowed them to be accepted by the village people as part of them-

selves. But they were industrious, even their enemies had to admit that, for they worked from morning till night. They were small and tough, like the horses of the steppes, with practically no personal needs. By unremitting toil they managed to wring a small profit from their poor and stony soil, and this the other peasants seldom managed to do. They lived lives of amazing simplicity. Every surplus penny was put back into their fields. They bought more cattle and the latest farm machinery and set up a chicken farm, and the eldest son took the produce into Tübingen once a week in a little Opel motor-car. They bought the car from a refuse dump for a few marks. When three of them were seen pushing the car up the hill to the village the peasants found it an inexhaustible subject for humour. Their laughter at the expense of the crazy East Prussians turned to resentment when, after three nights of hammering in the Kalahnes' barn, the car moved and the eldest son drove it screechingly down the hill.

The future Dr. Kalahne was the seventh child. He bore no resemblance whatever to his brothers and sisters. They were all of the same type—stolid, healthy peasants, with light blue lack-lustre eyes. They were big-boned, long-headed men, sparing of words, utterly devoted to their work. They trod their soil in silence, sat dumbly in front of the long kitchen table in the evenings, silently munching potatoes between their powerful jaws. They got up early in the morning, soon after sunrise, and washed themselves under the pump in the yard. They never sang, and avoided all contact with the youths of the village. The two sisters were exactly like their brothers. They were ugly, talked an almost unintelligible German and were working when they were not asleep. Their clothes were plain and colourless. When they went to church in the next village, where the only Catholic church in the neighbourhood was, they did not exchange a single word with the women they met, and if any young men ever called out after them they did not raise their eyes from the ground.

From an early age the youngest of the Kalahnes stood out from his brothers and sisters. He took no part in their work, but shunned the stables and the fields. He would sit in a shed behind the garden

and read. As he had no money he had recourse to the small library belonging to the teacher, Bringolf. Apart from a few schoolbooks and a small collection of hints for bee-keepers it contained nothing but Gustav Schwab's *Legends of Classical Antiquity*. This book became young Kalahne's bible. It was filled with heroic men who wounded the very gods so that the heavens were filled with their cries, and flinched at no deceit to gain the sweets of power. They stood before his mind's eye, these heroes in their glittering armour, living monuments to the consummate, care-free life.

In them was none of the sullen gloom that pervaded his parents' house, with its eternal slaving and everlasting, senseless digging and scraping of the soil; they knew no priest to warp their senses, no religion to convert the earth into a place for the exercise of charity and compassion; but man lived, a strong, healthy animal, thanks to his craft and cunning, superior to all the other animals, vying with the gods themselves in the intoxicating round of his life between power and death.

Kalahne was completely under the spell of this book. Not an evening passed without his describing his heroes' deeds to the young Bringolf, not a dream of his but was inspired by those stirring lays.

For his parents' labour he had nothing but loathing and contempt. He hated the village and the simplicity of his schoolmates. But he concealed his hatred behind an icy silence. Physically he was weak, because of a foot injury incurred at birth, which made him the butt of the peasant lads, but he swore to attain in later life the reality of power the sweets of which he never tired of extolling. To the young Kalahne absolute power over men, the power to steer their wills and their passions, life as a part in a great, heroic drama seemed worth any hazard.

He knew he would never get power by the exercise of bodily strength, that he could never aspire to enter by force into that select company of those who in the fullness of their might enjoyed the supreme joys of life; but, with the self-knowledge of a cripple, he took cognizance of his own weapons, intelligence and craft. As he sat over his books the fire inside him waxed from day to day, burned

hollows in his cheeks, gave him a feverish brow, made him breathe faster. It was not long before he put his weapons to the test. Young Bringolf, a strong lad, but credulous and gifted with a lively imagination, fell completely under his spell. Bringolf defended his weaker friend against the village lads, and in return Kalahne filled his young heart with wild dreams of incredible glory. They swore a friendship which only death could sunder, and for whole days they lay in the undergrowth, intoxicating themselves with their heroes' deeds. For Kalahne all this was far more than mere boyish romantic play. Inner excitement consumed his every word; his ardour fascinated young Bringolf, and finally subjugated him completely. The first occasion on which the young Kalahne gloried in the sensation of power over one of his fellows was when he made young Bringolf steal fruit for him and lay it at his feet as though he were his liege lord. How sweet it was to have at one's beck and call a human being who was stronger than oneself. The war came and the boys' hearts beat faster in excited expectation of the beginning of the era of heroic deeds. But death came, and hardship, and the people were afflicted, and there was unrest among the peasants. And finally there came defeat and revolution.

Kalahne was sixteen years old, and he and Bringolf attended the high school at Tübingen. On Armistice Day he locked himself in his room and stayed there for two days and nights. When he went back to school again his face was like a mask. The teachers were in awe of the boy's uncanny intelligence. His astonishing influence over the other boys was incomprehensible to their matter-of-fact natures. They knew that a little group had formed round Kalahne, a group of determined youths who looked up to the cripple with a veneration that bordered on the mystical. "Better death than slavery" was the motto of this little band.

As the youth was quite unsuited to work on the land old Kalahne let him study. But his peasant's sagacity was sufficient to cause him to insist on the boy's studying law. He refused to allow him to have anything to do with any philosophical hocus-pocus. The lad saw his chance and seized it. Thanks to his intelligence he had no need to devote a great deal of time to his books. He utilized

his spare time in practising domination over people. In those years of spiritual desolation it was not difficult to form groups of desperate young men. The war, and the shameful post-war years in Germany, had long since given the decisive blow to the old bourgeois world. Everywhere the better type of middle-class young man longed for something more than just to work for his bread-and-butter. The old conventions were breaking down. The State alone did not notice it.

Kalahne's group was differentiated from other groups mainly by reason of its leader's peculiarities. He demanded of his friends that they live according to the dictates of a heroic law. He himself decided what these dictates were. He forbade his followers to have any truck with the new ideas which sprang up in the country subsequent to the Revolution. He censured and proscribed every spark of that romantic enthusiasm which expressed itself in preferring serving as a volunteer in the Baltic, Upper Silesia, the Ruhr or against the Separatists to engaging in any fixed occupation or profession. It was the duty of every member of Kalahne's band to obtain the highest attainable post in the State service or the economic scheme. Thereafter it was his duty to exchange it as soon as possible for a more influential one.

As soon as Kalahne had completed his studies and obtained his degree he promptly accepted the offer of a job as press and personal secretary to the mayor of Siebenwasser. He joined the Social-Democratic Party as soon as he discovered that it would be expedient to do so.

When Kalahne came to Siebenwasser he changed his ways. He adapted himself modestly and quietly to the character of his superiors. At first Prätorius conceived a physical distaste for the pale, fiery-eyed little man with a limp. But this was soon succeeded by respect for Kalahne's enormous capacity. No one was so adept as Kalahne at mediating between the parties and reconciling their conflicting wishes. No one was so skilful at preparing the chief magistrate's public announcements or drafting the minutes of the council meetings to everybody's satisfaction as this remarkable young peasant from the Rauhen Alb. In spite of the secret inner

repugnance that he still felt for the young man, Prätorius, true to his Liberal Democratic principles, went out of his way to praise him before the influential men of the town. He succeeded in introducing Kalahne to the society of the town, consisting of the higher municipal officials and their wives and a few manufacturers, and in the end people ceased to notice either his extravagant way of speech or his physical defect.

Six months after his entrance into the municipal service Kalahne was appointed permanent representative of the city magistrature on the theatre committee. Three months later Bringolf was offered the post of superintendent of the municipal theatre, at Kalahne's suggestion. Bringolf had abandoned the study of law at Tübingen after only two terms. He had become juvenile lead in one of the companies of wandering players who were springing up at that time and had eventually settled as stage manager of a small theatre on the lower Rhine. Before his official engagement at Siebenwasser he swore to Kalahne that he would take no step without his consent. And he swore an oath by the law of their secret society that but a few years would pass before the realization of all that Kalahne and his followers stood for.

Bringolf worked under a lucky star. Thanks to Kalahne's influence he was given a bigger subsidy than his predecessors. On Kalahne's advice he founded a Union of the Friends of the Municipal Theatre of Siebenwasser. And thanks to it the wives and daughters of the town officials and business men were given a heaven-sent opportunity of contributing their mite to the cause of German culture at the fortnightly meetings. What was more important for Bringolf was that the dramatic critics of the three local papers were given an opportunity of fetching their mouldy old manuscripts out of their drawers and reading them aloud at last. And what a joy it was for the members of the Union to be able publicly to express an opinion on the works of Shaw, Kaiser, Brecht and Bronnen, and, of course, to be able to read a flattering account of themselves in the local papers next morning. Bringolf, at Kalahne's instigation, encouraged all this under the slogan of "Practical Co-operation in the Development of German Culture," but the

practical consequence was that any possibility of real criticism was stifled at birth because there was practically no one who took any interest in the play who was not also a member of the Union of the Friends of the Municipal Theatre of Siebenwasser.

Kalahne wrote out a short speech which Bringolf had to repeat by rote before every performance. "We are a great spiritual community," the speech said. "It is our life which is enacted on the stage. In the face of life we must be filled with humility and go on working meekly as servants in the temple of art."

When Kalahne handed Bringolf these lines, Bringolf actually made a laughing protest. "That's sheer intellectual bribery and corruption," he said. But Kalahne looked at him soberly and said:

"You don't understand people."

Kalahne's control of the theatre gave him a strong position in local society. Wherever he went he was praised and honoured as the theatre's spiritual father. Barriers that would have been insurmountable to the little man with the limp succumbed promptly to the Muses. Kalahne gained official control of the intellectual life of Siebenwasser.

When a vacancy arose on the *Siebenwasser and District Gazette* following the death of an old member of the staff, Kalahne had no difficulty in securing the job for Schickedanz, one of the most devoted of his followers. Kalahne entrusted him with the task of using all his craft and cunning to disturb the self-assurance of the ruling classes, to sow doubt wherever doubt was possible, and above all to win recruits from among the young. Before Schickedanz had been in Siebenwasser three weeks he started a supplement, which he called the "Forum of Youth," and invited contributions, comments and complaints from all young persons. This supplement was so successful that it caused a big increase in circulation and consequentially the proprietor, an immensely rich printer, did not object to the somewhat exaggerated views that were sometimes expressed.

Schickedanz had to avoid all public contact with Kalahne apart from what common decency demanded of two old school friends.

He received his orders through an intermediary who was also a member of the little band.

His first instructions were to avoid any attack on the Social-Democrats for the time being.

". . . In everything you write, now and during the next few years, you must write always of persons and never of parties. I lay great stress on this. You must write as if political parties did not exist. That will make them disappear all the quicker. Emphasize that there is only one life, and that its supreme moment is the moment of victory. Do not say so outright, but suggest the idea in a hundred anecdotes. In all of them consciousness of victory must be represented to be the height of human happiness. Such instances will be your best weapons against the present epoch, which by comparison will seem petty and insipid. In short, do not engage in polemics; give object lessons. For the work of cleansing we must appeal to men's instincts, not to men's reasoning powers. A successful lion hunt is worth more than a won lawsuit. You must demonstrate by examples again and again that victory is the reward of courage, not of being in the right. That is the watershed that divides us from the past."

Schickedanz's articles soon became the favourite reading of the youth of Siebenwasser.

As soon as his unsuccessful tour was broken off Bringolf went to see Kalahne, who lived on the upper floor of a house in the Webergasse belonging to the widow of a post office official. Bringolf had on his new English summer suit and was tanned by the sun which was responsible for his deficit. There was a smell of onions and warmed-up coffee as he climbed the narrow stairs.

Surely there's no need for him to live in a hole like this, Bringolf thought to himself. I'll take him out in the car on Sunday, to give him the smell of the woods in his nostrils for once.

He knocked at Kalahne's door. A voice called out "Yes?"

Bringolf went in. Kalahne was shaving in front of a mirror.

"I know all about it already. Sit down," Kalahne said, and went on shaving.

Bringolf sat down. What an extraordinary room, he thought. It contained nothing but a chair, a table, a cupboard and a wash-stand.

"What is the amount of the deficit?" asked Kalahne, starting to lather his face for the second time.

"How on earth have you heard about it?" asked Bringolf.

"I asked you what the amount of the deficit was."

"Three thousand—quite enough for me!"

"You can start playing here in two days' time!"

Bringolf rose to his feet. "But I don't understand—"

"You'll play for one month under your own management, until the official opening of the season."

"Yes, but—"

"If you've got a play that will draw you can make double the amount of the deficit in a fortnight. Have you a play?"

"No."

"I have."

Bringolf looked at the small form before him, the narrow shoulders surmounted by an enormous head, quite out of proportion to the rest of him. The man's whole body seemed nothing but a support for that head.

Kalahne washed his face, then took a towel and dried himself and said:

"*The Gay Vineyard* will cause a scandal."

"You must be mad," said Bringolf. "How can I risk a scandal in a clerical town like this?"

"I tell you you can," said Kalahne, grinning. "The Social-Democrats will turn it into an occasion for defending freedom of speech, the liberty of the creative spirit, et cetera. They need something to get excited about at last. I don't think much of the play either way, by the way. All the townspeople will rush to see it because of the sensation it will cause, and the Centre will kick up such a commotion that still more people will want to go and see the scandalous thing. And the thing won't go farther than a formal protest, because the Centre and the Social-Democrats are the two strongest parties on the council, and they will have something

to squabble about again. And your deficit will be covered and you'll give two-thirds of the surplus profit to our cause."

"Certainly," said Bringolf.

"I have given Schickedanz instructions, and everything will go according to plan."

"All right," said Bringolf. "I'll apply for permission for a month's season under my own management right away."

"That's all been done already," said Kalahne, sitting down and wiping his sore cheeks on the towel.

"What? Did you apply for permission?" exclaimed Bringolf in astonishment.

"Yes, I took the liberty of putting your name to the official request for permission," said Kalahne, getting up and going over to the primus stove to boil some water.

"Thank you," said Bringolf.

"The whole thing has been arranged, including the scandal."

A grin spread across Kalahne's face. Bringolf went over towards the door.

"Won't you have some tea?"

"No, thanks. But tell me, why do you live like this?"

"I've got to be poor," Kalahne answered.

As soon as Bringolf stepped into his office his secretary handed him a parcel. "The text for the new play," he said. Bringolf tore off the wrapping. It was *The Gay Vineyard*. Bringolf went at once to the Café Adelmann and started reading. Before the end of the first act he had drunk two coffees. Then he changed over to cognac. The whole thing would be child's play to stage. The lines spoke and acted themselves. Behind each word he read the scandal loomed bigger and bigger. It would be impossible for the Church to approve of stuff like this. And the officials! But Bringolf was enjoying himself. This was Theatre. It ought to be played before the peasants in the villages. Ye gods!

Bringolf went back to his office at about five o'clock and found an official letter on his desk. The letter stated:

"In compliance with your request of August 16, 1927, we here-

with grant you the use of the municipal theatre under your own management for the term of one calendar month. As surety we require a deposit of Rm.2,000. Having received a cheque for this amount upon the local People's Bank, we have deposited it for safe-keeping in the City Savings Bank. We await your acknowledgment."

Bringolf dictated an acknowledgment, signed the agreement with the theatre management and wrote on the rehearsal notice board: "First performance of *The Gay Vineyard*. Rehearsal Thursday ten o'clock. The Superintendent."

He met Kalahne in the Café Adelmann that evening and asked him:

"To whom do I repay the two thousand marks deposited if all goes well?"

"To Frau von Berg," Kalahne said.

The first performance of *The Gay Vineyard* took place at the municipal theatre of Siebenwasser on August 28, 1927. Bringolf had solicitously rallied the Union of the Friends of the Municipal Theatre and caused Allwohn, the school principal with whom he had spent the previous night drinking, to give a lecture to the Union on "The Crude in German Folk Poetry." He had paid the principal a secret fee of eighty marks and held out to him the possibility of staging his drama, *Attila*. Siebenwasser's three newspapers reproduced Allwohn's lecture, and Schickedanz wrote a paragraph about it in which he said that no apology was needed for crudity, provided that what was implied was German crudity and not a Jewish view of crudity, which would be an utter misrepresentation. Schickedanz is getting into position, Bringolf decided, and the same night he persuaded the editor of one of the rival papers to print an article condemning the introduction of racial theories into matters of art.

The house was sold out for the first night. The Union of the Friends of the Municipal Theatre turned up en masse. The professional men—lawyers and doctors—and the city officials and leaders of the business community filled the stalls. The circle, oc-

cupied by theatre-lovers of lower rank, was full too, with employees, young workers from the Society for Promotion of Popular Education, and children from the upper forms of the High School. Schickedanz went to his seat in the second row of the stalls a few minutes before the performance began. He sat down and pretended to study the programme. He heard his name repeated several times by people standing about in groups between the seats. Everyone in the auditorium was keyed up to a state of eager expectation. Bringolf had had vine-leaves twined round the pillars in the stalls and the circle. An enormous barrel had been placed in the foyer. Frau von Berg, dressed as a vintager, poured out the home-grown wine. Laughter and loud talk filled the gangways. Schickedanz stared at his programme, motionless.

When the house was darkened and the curtain went up Schickedanz breathed more freely. He felt happier in the semi-darkness.

There was applause after the first few scenes. It began in the circle and was taken up in the stalls. How easy it was to get them, Schickedanz thought. He made an effort to forget the people all round him and concentrate on the stage. Everyone round him was trying hard to suppress an almost continual titter. It was impossible to deny that Bringolf was making it all go very smoothly. After the second act Schickedanz decided that it was a pleasant farce. And the next time the curtain went up Schickedanz said to himself that really it was absurd to make a mountain out of a molehill. There was no denying that the piece had humour. And it was well constructed too. True, it had nothing whatever to do with the kind of art which Schickedanz recognized as the only true kind—the kind which exalted earnestness and singleness of purpose in the way Kalahne, with his love for the heroic and his hostility to this weak and effeminate epoch, exalted them. But it would be stupid to overlook the popular humour in this piece, its entertaining crudities, its comic situations. This had nothing to do with Jewish ideas or theories—it was the real thing. The whole edifice that he had constructed on Kalahne's instructions had feet of clay. Of course it was worth while helping old Bringolf, who wanted to raise a bit of a stink to fill his house. Well, Bringolf had filled

his house, but how was he, Schickedanz, to extricate himself from this affair? The whole thing was entirely unsuited to being the battleground of two rival philosophies of life. Hadn't he, Schickedanz, caught himself laughing a moment or two ago? The play certainly had verve. How it came over the footlights! By this time the whole house was behaving like one large tipsy family.

Eventually, when the assessor lay upon the dung-heap, even the stalls could no longer restrain themselves and the applause rose to an ovation. Frau von Berg, who occupied her accustomed box, and was wearing a light blue apron and a white cap, rose to her feet.

"Down with the canting hypocrites!" she shouted. "Down with the canting hypocrites!" And the whole house took up the cry.

Just when Schickedanz had succeeded in fighting his way through the applauding throng as far as the exit, Bringolf appeared on the stage. A roar of applause greeted him. Frau von Berg tore her cap from her head and flung it onto the stage, with a flower. Bringolf lifted his arms for silence. With a good deal of difficulty he got it.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he said. "This evening has once more proved to me, and in a manner far more overwhelming than I should ever have thought possible, that art has found an unprejudiced sanctuary in Siebenwasser in spite of all efforts to the contrary made by the representatives of an effete morality. I am happy to have lived this hour."

The applause went on for a long time. The whole audience had risen from their seats.

"Down with the hypocrites!" cried Frau von Berg.

"Down with the hypocrites!" the circle roared.

Bringolf bowed, smiling.

The deficit is covered, he thought.

Schickedanz left the theatre inconspicuously. He threaded his way rapidly through the crowd of gay people homeward bound from the theatre. A mood of unaffected gaiety seemed to per-

meate the streets. The inns were filling up. Schickedanz was filled with fury.

This was a pretty kettle of fish Kalahne had landed him in. So Bringolf's deficit was to be carried on his shoulders, and they would have the laugh on him. What on earth was he to say against the play? It was very good theatre. Should he say it was immoral? But his whole being revolted at the idea of entering the company of dismal jimmies and elderly maiden aunts. After all, the theatre wasn't a boarding school for young ladies, and he, Alfred Schickedanz, was no reactionary. That thunderous applause had been partly aimed at him, he had been acutely aware of it. They had laughed at him behind his back as he left the theatre. Was he on the grounds of public morality solemnly to denounce the play and all those laughing people? And what about him, Schickedanz? Wasn't it precisely this public morality that he had always hated? Schickedanz shivered. He was in a mighty rage with Kalahne.

After twenty minutes he had left the last houses of Siebenwasser behind him. He walked down a dark main road. A few lights glimmered in cottages scattered about the countryside.

Frau von Berg had invited the cast and a few friends to her estate after the performance. She had arranged a vintage feast on the terrace and in the garden. She had had small drinking arbours erected, and there was to be dancing on the threshing floors in the middle of the barn.

The company rode to the estate in three large waggons drawn by heavy carthorses. Kalahne and Bringolf met Frau von Berg at the Café Adelmann. Bringolf ordered real French brandy.

"Did you expect this?" he said to Kalahne, laughing.

"A remarkable success," Kalahne said.

"A sensation for our little Siebenwasser!" Frau von Berg called out, seizing Bringolf by the sleeve.

Bringolf, as happy as a child, ordered two boiled eggs. When he had eaten them he announced that the worst of his hunger was now appeased and that they could go.

Poor fellow, thought Frau von Berg. He hasn't had a proper meal for three days, all on account of the rehearsals.

She unlocked the little Buick, and the men entered the car. Just when they had left the town behind them and Frau von Berg was able to put on speed, she wrenched the steering wheel over to one side so suddenly that the two men at the back were flung hard against each other. She braked hard, but accelerated again a moment afterwards and drove swiftly on.

"An obstruction?" Kalahne asked.

"No, it was some fool walking on the left instead of on the right," Frau von Berg said angrily.

"These foolish pedestrians," Bringolf said.

The man who had been cursed by the driver of the now rapidly disappearing motor-car for walking on the right side of the road was no other than Schickedanz. He had distinguished the house he was looking for in the dazzling glare of the headlights. The car's fenders had nearly struck him. He was spattered with mud right up to his knees. "Road-hogs," he muttered as the car disappeared round the bend. Then he rang the bell. Gerhard Träger opened the door.

"You're a bit early," Träger said as they entered the room. "Dr. Kalahne said he wasn't coming till shortly after twelve."

"I thought he said immediately after the performance."

"It doesn't matter in the least, though," said Gerhard Träger, pushing a chair towards Schickedanz. "We'll try to entertain each other."

Schickedanz sat down and looked round the room. It was completely unadorned. A long, bare, brightly-polished table stood in the middle of the room. There were no pictures on the panelled walls. The only decoration in the room was a sword and a steel helmet, mementoes of the fighting in Upper Silesia and the Baltic.

"Will you have a drink?" asked Gerhard Träger.

"Yes, please," said Schickedanz.

Träger poured out two cherry brandies.

"Thank you," Schickedanz said.

He found it hard to look Gerhard Träger straight in the eyes. The pupils of Träger's mouse-grey, gleaming eyes stared at you piercingly. They were small, these pupils, and if there was no anxiety in them neither was there any warmth. They seemed to impale the objects on which they rested. The cold expression of those eyes was intensified by the man's albino-blond hair parted over his narrow reddish-brown forehead. Gerhard Träger was a tall man, though the upper part of his body gave the impression of being rather slight. Two-thirds of his outward appearance seemed to be taken up by his legs. His thighs were long and narrow, and their shape was emphasized by his breeches, and the upper part of his body, and particularly his head, seemed to be only an acknowledgment of the elastic power of his legs.

This was the first time that Schickedanz had seen Gerhard Träger at close quarters.

He had learned that Gerhard Träger lived near Siebenwasser only two months ago. He would never have guessed that the author of that wonderful story *The Way to Die* breathed the gentle air of Württemberg. He had always believed that this man must live in the lordly seclusion of some northern clime—the Swedish cliffs, perhaps, or Pomerania's silent plains.

Gerhard Träger was first heard of in Siebenwasser when the new Sport and Defence Society was founded. Träger became the chairman—or, as he was called in the club announcements, the Leader—of this movement, from which Jews and men over thirty were barred. Gerhard Träger's followers scarcely numbered more than forty. They wore a kind of uniform—olive-green shirts with shoulder straps—and seized every opportunity of marching through the town in military formation, and people laughed at them.

The good burghers of Siebenwasser grumbled at this playing at soldiers. They were quite unable to believe that anyone, voluntarily and not at the State's command, could subject himself to a discipline which had a very military flavour about it. Their South German way of living assorted ill with the solemn, clockwork rigidity with which the men in olive-green paraded. All the same they couldn't suppress their pleasure when one day Gerhard

Träger's followers succeeded in breaking up a Communist meeting and putting the proletarian pack to flight with the help of their shoulder straps.

Only young men attached themselves to Gerhard Träger—high-school boys and artisans' sons. Their parents grumbled at the crazy officer living out there in his little cottage and distracting their sons' minds from school and work with his playing at soldiers. The police were there to deal with the Communists, and they had had enough and more than enough of war with France. What was the point of all this tomfoolery?

All on account of a few Jews? Ridiculous!

Schickedanz's curiosity was aroused. He would very much have liked to ask why a young officer and writer of Gerhard Träger's eminence should have chosen to settle in Siebenwasser of all places and drill a lot of half-grown striplings in a way which he found unpleasantly reminiscent of the cadet corps at school during the War. But when he tried to open a conversation with Gerhard Träger, the man pushed a newspaper over towards him and took up a book.

Introduction to Bee-Keeping, Schickedanz read on the well-thumbed cover. They went on sitting opposite each other for a long time. Schickedanz waited impatiently, but Gerhard Träger said nothing.

Eventually Schickedanz broke the silence.

"Herr Träger, I read your book many years ago, when I was still at the university. It was a revelation to us."

Gerhard Träger made no answer, so Schickedanz went on:

"Its affirmation of the heroic principle brought us new hope in a time which was quite obviously suffering from softening of the joints. You have many adherents among the young, Herr Träger."

"Were you in the war?" was Gerhard Träger's answer.

"No," said Schickedanz. "I belong to Class 1902. We just missed it."

"A lost generation."

Gerhard Träger put his book aside. He looked at Schickedanz, smiling. He didn't like the fellow. His face was soft and he wore

spectacles. Besides, he had short legs and round eyes and talked literary claptrap like any sanctimonious imbecile belonging to the Jewish Press. Revelations, and the affirmation of the heroic principle, indeed. Journalese. One needed to be cautious with such gentry. They were enamoured enough of heroism and self-sacrifice, yet when it came to the point all they did was to sit down and write essays about them.

It was obvious to Gerhard Träger that the man was of importance only tactically. No doubt he was sentimental and ambitious. A bleating little bourgeois, not to be gained by gold but by flattery.

"A great responsibility rests on your shoulders, Herr Schickedanz," said Gerhard Träger, placing both his elbows on the table and staring at Schickedanz.

Schickedanz froze slightly under Träger's gaze but felt exalted by these words.

"I know," he said. "I am aware of it."

"The war is not yet over. You must think you're in the field, with a section to hold."

"I do hold a section," answered Schickedanz. "And I do what I can to combat and exterminate the false spirit abroad in these last few years."

"It is not for nothing that we have taken you into our confidence."

Schickedanz blushed.

"We know who you are, and we hope you will not disappoint us."

"You can rely on me," replied Schickedanz.

How the fellow is taken in by phrases, Gerhard Träger thought.

He poured out two cherry brandies. The glass in Schickedanz's hand trembled.

It had begun to rain gently outside. The wood burned in the stove. Gentle shudders of excitement passed through Schickedanz's frame. So he was needed. He could enter Träger's little band of followers. This man whom he honoured trusted him. There was a force behind him now, sustaining him, investing everything he did with a purpose.

There was a knock on the door and Kalahne came in.

He greeted Gerhard Träger and shook hands with Schickedanz. They sat down.

Kalahne wiped drops of rain from his forehead.

"I declare this meeting to be secret."

Gerhard Träger looked at Kalahne, who nodded. Schickedanz nodded too.

"I plight all three of us on our word of honour never to betray what is to pass between us."

The three shook hands. Schickedanz was quivering with excitement.

Gerhard Träger took a paper from his pocket and read aloud:

"The following agreement was made today between Dr. Kalahne, press officer of the City of Siebenwasser and the undersigned Lieutenant Gerhard Träger, S.A. Group Leader for Siebenwasser and district. Dr. Kalahne herewith transfers control of the group of young men which has formed round him to the S.A. group leader, but retains the leadership of the group within the N.S.D.A.P. Dr. Kalahne acknowledges the jurisdiction of the Party in all matters. The Party on its side will continue to sanction his masquerade as a supporter of the Weimar Republic until the time is ripe for coming out in the open. Moreover Herr Alfred Schickedanz, journalist on the staff of the *Siebenwasser and District Gazette,* undertakes to act under all circumstances according to the Party dictates and he hereby pledges himself to unconditional obedience to the Party leaders. Within his province it is his duty to undermine the bourgeois mentality in every way he can. He is not an open supporter of the Party either, and is directly answerable in all matters to Dr. Kalahne. Signed, Siebenwasser, September, etc., etc."

Gerhard Träger laid the document before Dr. Kalahne and said: "Are you ready to sign?" Dr. Kalahne took a pen and put his signature to the document. Schickedanz's head was in a whirl. What on earth had he been enticed into? He was to submit himself to a jurisdiction of which he was completely ignorant. All his actions would be supervised. He looked at Gerhard Träger.

"If you feel in two minds about it there's nothing to prevent your withholding your signature," he heard Träger say. "But you must realize that if you do you will cease to be a member of Dr. Kalahne's band."

Now the truth dawned on Schickedanz. Kalahne had brought him along as automatically as a bride takes her dowry. Kalahne's little band had gone over to the Party. The good people of Siebenwasser laughed at Gerhard Träger's movement, which they regarded as the antics of a lot of striplings and half-wits. But one would work secretly. Outwardly one would go on living as before. And one would have an aim in life; the annihilation of this State, the destruction of this ridiculous Republic. Before one lay the thrill of a secret battle, and the prospect of victory. There would be no more need to sit in the office, wondering where one belonged in the world, feeling utterly at sea. Gerhard Träger would do the thinking for one. Anything to escape from the pre-occupations of a disconsolate, badly-paid private life.

Schickedanz signed. Gerhard Träger put the document carefully back in his pocket.

"In future Dr. Kalahne's decision in all cultural manners will be final," he said. "Herr Schickedanz will take all his instructions from Dr. Kalahne."

Schickedanz looked at Kalahne. His features were calm and controlled. His protruding ears were bloodless. Gerhard Träger rose to his feet.

"That concludes our business, gentlemen," he said.

Kalahne and Schickedanz left the house. It was pitch dark.

They groped their way along the garden wall without speaking a word. The muffled sound of a tango floated down the hill from Frau von Berg's estate.

When they reached the market-place Kalahne gave Schickedanz a small packet.

"Here's your notice," he said.

"What notice?" Schickedanz asked.

"Your notice of *The Gay Vineyard*. You're to publish it tomor-

row. Then the fat will be in the fire in time for tomorrow evening's performance."

"But I haven't even read it!"

"You'll have to get used to that, I'm afraid. Besides, your private opinion about the play is completely uninteresting. What we need is a sensation, and that's good enough for you. And I can give you the positive assurance that nothing whatever will happen to you as a consequence of your valiant intercession on behalf of public morality."

Kalahne laughed. Schickedanz had the manuscript in his hand.

Kalahne walked away. "Good night," he called out, leaving Schickedanz standing under a street-lamp in the light of which the raindrops sparkled.

Carefully Schickedanz lifted the flap of the envelope and read the headline: BOLSHEVISM IN SIEBENWASSER. Then he put the manuscript back in his pocket. He turned up his collar. The impudence of Kalahne, he thought to himself. He wanted a sensation at all costs. The people had laughed at the play and tomorrow they would read that it was Bolshevism. And what they saw in print they would certainly believe. For was there a single one of them with an opinion of his own? And the temple of art would be transformed into a pigsty overnight, and the witticisms they had enjoyed so thoroughly only a few hours ago would turn out to be nothing but smut. Schickedanz tramped up and down in the rain. Should he disobey Kalahne's secret orders and give his honest opinion? The play wasn't bad. True, it was vulgar, but the author had genuine dramatic feeling. But what did the play matter? Other things seemed to be at stake. There was to be a scandal, to what end he could not see. Supposing he rebelled and told his editor the whole story and published the truth about the conspiracy? No-one would believe him. Kalahne stood high in the confidence of the Social-Democratic bureaucracy and Gerhard Träger would deny everything. It would be he, Schickedanz, who would be done for if he attacked Kalahne. Kalahne had got him his job, he could never have hoped for it alone; and he was head

over ears in debt. In his position it would be sheer suicide to speak the truth. Kalahne would soon have him kicked out of his job. And there he would be, stranded and penniless, with his mother deprived of the help he gave her and all his chances gone.

Schickedanz made up his mind to see the thing through. He would hand the copy in at the printer's at seven o'clock next morning. After all, what did the play matter? The important thing, as Gerhard Träger said, was to undermine the bourgeois State. What did he get from it after all? Three hundred marks a month, and he was expected to be a cultural influence at that. A fine culture, indeed. His mother had a pension of only forty marks for her dead husband, and he had to help his sister Agnes as well. The tie he was wearing was turned, and only recently at the theatre festival at Heidelberg he had seen a Jew fellow at the Hotel Viktoria spend twelve marks on his supper alone.

Schickedanz was still aware of the cherry brandy he had drunk. He was no drinker. Besides, he was depressed. He was fed up with life, disgusted with his job. Even the advertisement manager was more powerful than he. Every foul film had to be given a good notice. The only full freedom you had was in reviewing novels, because the publishers didn't advertise. You could ape independence there right enough, but who cared a fig for that? It's a disgusting life, thought Schickedanz. His room at home was cold, and he had to be at the printer's at seven o'clock. Where was he to go in the meantime?

He could not bear being alone in the night like this, and remembered Maria. He rummaged in his pockets. He had ten marks on him, and after the article had appeared Kalahne would certainly be good for another loan.

Schickedanz looked at his watch. It was ten minutes past two. The rain had stopped. The leaves were falling from the walnut trees at the edge of the market-place.

Schickedanz walked slowly towards the Old Town. The street-lamps had been extinguished. Schickedanz swayed slightly as he walked. I'm drunk, he thought, but it's all the same to me. . . .

He found his way by the pointed gables, which were illuminated by the light of the stars. In front of a tiny house in the Fleischergasse he stopped and groped for the bell. He found the wooden knob and rang. One short ring and two long ones. That was his signal. It took a few minutes before the door was opened. Schickedanz waited in the shadow.

"Alfred?" a voice asked.

"Yes," whispered Schickedanz.

"Have you got any money?"

"Ten marks."

She let him in.

They sat down on a flowered settee, in a room which led through to the yard. Before them was a bottle of crême-de-menthe, and next to the bottle six glasses, which Maria's father had won at a rifle-shooting competition at Heilbronn thirty years before. They were plain polished glasses, with a coloured target on each. They were the only relics of Maria's home.

"And where have you come from?" Maria asked.

"I've been working."

"Were you at the theatre too?"

"Yes."

"What's up with the theatre this evening?" Maria said, laughing. "I had a visitor earlier on and he'd been to the theatre. And no sooner was he out of the house when somebody else came and he'd been to the theatre, and now you come and you've been to the theatre too."

Schickedanz emptied his second glass. The crazy thoughts that had been whirling in his head had all gone now. That was fine. He looked at Maria. Her voice and her nut-brown skin. And her mouth and her raven hair. Would she keep her mouth shut? Yes, she would keep her mouth shut. Because she knew that if she didn't she'd be done for so far as Siebenwasser was concerned. Two town councillors were among Maria's clients, but Schickedanz didn't know that.

She's just a simple harlot, he thought dizzily, his mind in a green haze from the crême-de-menthe, but she's worth more to me

than ten young ladies from a seminary for the daughters of gentlemen.

He stood up and took off his coat. Maria switched off the light. He knew that she was naked.

"Oh, you men . . ." Maria groaned.

The room was dark, except for a small, blue light burning over the bed.

Frau von Berg had been a widow for two years. Her husband, Baron von Berg, was just completing a journey round the world when the war broke out. He was interned in Cape Town. The internment camp was distinguished for its great freedom. If one had enough money there was nothing to prevent one's spending one's entire days in the town, sitting at ease in the cafés and awaiting the end of the war—which, of course, could have but one outcome. Baron von Berg had English relatives on his mother's side, and they stood warranty for him. It was not long before his internment was transformed to a kind of chivalrous detention. He lived in the town, employed a negro servant and went out riding. He was not allowed to leave the town or approach the harbour. Very soon he succeeded in gaining an entrée to the houses of the wealthy merchants of Cape Town. The families of Dutch or English peasant stock were captivated by the handsome baron. He was an excellent performer on the violin and was an adept at entertaining mothers. He lived in Cape Town for three years. The young heiresses of Cape Town vied with each other in trying to capture him, and in the end a certain Miss van Bommel succeeded in reducing all her friends to envy and despair by the announcement of her engagement to him. They married immediately after the end of the war and spent six months travelling round the world. When they reached the German frontier at Kehl and crossed the bridge on foot—because at that time all wheeled traffic was forbidden—she felt as if an iron gate had shut behind her. They settled on the baron's estate in Württemberg. The baron devoted himself to agriculture. At the time of the struggle in the Ruhr he was offered a position in the diplomatic service, and for three months

they lived in London. The baron brought all his English connections into play. The intervention of the English consul on behalf of the Separatists in the Palatinate was, as a matter of fact, partly due to his efforts. After the end of the conflict in the Ruhr he left London, with little confidence left in Germany's moral or intellectual capacity to find favour in the eyes of English public opinion. One sentence he wrote to the Foreign Office in Berlin became famous in subsequent years.

"Germany's main asset in England, and especially so far as the man in the street is concerned, lies in her honourable defeat," he stated. "The Englishman's sense of fair play is our stronghold. Let us do nothing to forfeit their respect by making a parade of strength. Because if we do and it ever comes to a conflict it will be all up with the unity of our country for ever. For in every conflict with this country we shall be the losers, for England goes to war only when the chances are absolutely in her favour."

The report was filed in the archives and the baron went back to his estate. His wife loved the quiet, cultivated man whose life she shared. A child was born to them in 1924, and the baron looked upon his heir. But two weeks after birth the child died of stoppage of the bowels. Baron von Berg locked himself in his room and wrote a letter to his mother, saying he felt so dispirited with life that the death of his child actually filled him with relief. Now that he knew the long-cherished notions of peace and order were in danger of being thrown overboard and that the life of man was once more engulfed in a whirlpool, he no longer believed in anything. He meant this not only from the political point of view, but he felt it everywhere, all round him. He could not express exactly what he meant, but he believed that the war was by no means over yet, and that for the next fifty years a life of cultured aloofness would be impossible. The world had gone mad. He was only a landowner and a sportsman, but it was obvious even to his simple intelligence that something was wrong. And should he be asked what he, a simple Württemberg landowner, meant by it, he could only answer that the whole thing looked mighty suspicious to him, though no-one should let the summer be spoiled

by his mood. Perhaps it was only his son's death that was responsible for the dark clouds he saw everywhere before his eyes.

His mother hurried to the bereaved couple. The baron went to the station to meet her. It had been raining off and on and the streets were wet. The baron was a good driver. As he was about to overtake a cart laden with timber, a child, who was having a joy-ride on the tree-trunks on his way to the village school, jumped off. He had seen some strawberries by the wayside. The baron braked as hard as he could and swerved across the road. The car crashed. He was flung twelve yards down the incline. He was still alive when they picked him up. He was taken to Siebenwasser hospital, where he was found to be suffering from a fractured skull. He died without recovering consciousness. His wife and mother were with him, holding his hands.

Frau von Berg remained in mourning for a year. Then she returned to normal life. She took over the management of the estate. She was twenty-six years old.

Bringolf had danced little during the evening. He sat at a table near the terrace on a small wrought-iron balcony. The party was over. The first glimmer of dawn could be seen down the valley. How ridiculous it made the lamps look. And the couples could be seen plainly in the garden. "Look, sex play," Bringolf remarked, pointing to the seats. "It's the nature of the beasts," Frau von Berg replied. "Should we make ourselves out to be any better than we are?"

"No," said Bringolf, looking at her.

"It's getting light," she said. Bringolf stood up. Angelika von Berg walked across the terrace in front of him. She was still dressed as a vintager. Bringolf avoided looking at her back. He closed his eyes and breathed deeply. When he went into the cloakroom he saw the woman again. Now I could . . . he thought, but he said nothing and his lips were dry.

"I'll drive you home if you're tired," said Angelika von Berg, smiling.

"I'm not tired," he answered. But by this time she was leading

the way down the steps to where the car was standing. They climbed in. She drove away.

Soon Bringolf realized that they were not on the road to Siebenwasser.

Schickedanz was standing in front of the mirror tying his tie. He had to hurry. The first rays of the sun were streaming through the cracks in the shutters and the sparrows were chattering in the back yard. Schickedanz was silent. Ten marks had gone and tomorrow was only the twenty-fifth. Maria smoothed out the pillows. Would she keep her mouth shut? But, of course, he knew that Maria kept her mouth shut. Her license as a masseuse depended on the goodwill of a number of town councillors, and they had given her to understand that it would pay her to keep her mouth shut. So Maria did not talk and only received regular clients. Apart from that she was a nurse. She had thirty-five hundred marks in the bank, but needed another four thousand to buy the lease of the inn at Wimpfen. Her fiancé, a motor-cycle salesman in Esslingen—"my first love," as Maria used to call him—could not help her with a penny.

It's a crazy world, Schickedanz thought to himself, wiping Maria's rouge from his lips with a towel.

He heard her voice behind him.

"That must have been an extraordinary play last night—"

Schickedanz turned round.

Maria was sitting on the settee in a faded dressing gown, with the sheets of paper containing the notice of the play before her.

This made Schickedanz lose his temper.

"What's that got to do with you?" he roared.

"It was just lying on the table so I read it."

"Put it away at once!"

Schickedanz flung his coat over his shoulders, snatched up the sheets of paper and put them in his left pocket.

"Is the play really as immoral as all that?" Maria asked.

"It's scandalous!" said Schickedanz at the top of his voice.

"But why are you shouting like that? I can't help it if it is!"

Maria rose to her feet in a huff, drew the kimono tighter round her and walked over to the mirror.

"But then you men are all like that. When it's all over, you're quite unbearable. . . ."

"All right, all right," snarled Schickedanz, putting ten marks down on the table and going over towards the door.

"How coarse you are today—flinging the money down like that!"

"Oh, stop it," murmured Schickedanz. Suddenly he found the woman revolting. He found everything revolting—the play, the notice of it, Kalahne, Siebenwasser, but, most of all, his job.

I'll go home and have a bath, he said to himself.

He walked out into the passage. Maria followed with a pocket lamp. The unpleasantly sweet flavour of crême-de-menthe still lingered in his mouth. He felt a hair on his lips and spat it out.

"Alfred, I'll go and see the play tomorrow," Maria whispered. "It must be a lark. But tell me, what is cultural Bolshevism?"

Schickedanz went away without answering. The air was clear and fresh. The dew glittered on the slate roofs of the Old Town. The façade of the town hall stood out with preternatural distinctness in the light of morning.

Schickedanz felt cold. He ran across the deserted square. He felt the manuscript in his pocket.

Women can never keep quiet when you've finished with them, he thought, and went straight to the printer's.

The *Siebenwasser and District Gazette* appeared about midday, just about the time the children came out of school, and the factory hands downed tools and the office workers and town hall officials who hadn't got wives at home to cook their dinner distributed themselves among the various restaurants.

Kalahne sat in the Café Adelmann. He hated the fumes and smells of the restaurant, and the company of clerks hurriedly lapping up their soup and reading newspapers at the same time. He had nothing but contempt for the "shop" he heard being talked all round him. He was filled with revulsion for the food they ate, the expressions they used, the jokes they laughed at.

He carried his repudiation of the ordinary life of an official to the extent of declining to attend the weekly luncheon of the town assessors at the Crown Inn, nor did he participate in any of the numerous drinking bouts. He had not taken any part in them during his student days either. He considered students' clubs to be the breeding places of class arrogance, and he maintained this attitude with great vigour. He deliberately kept aloof from the academic society of the town. His social intercourse was confined to paying visits to Frau von Berg, attending the "evenings" which the manufacturer Winter gave every two months, and his meetings with Bringolf. He stressed his aloofness in every way he could, and nothing gave him greater pleasure than the bad name he enjoyed among the municipal staff. He was suspected of secret vices and his visits to Frau von Berg were resented. His taste for the theatre and for books caused him to be suspected of a lack of stability, and he was the victim of all sorts of small-town gossip, invented in the hope of damaging him in the eyes of his superiors. The strongest indictment of this peasant's son from the Rauhen Alb was based on his way of working. Kalahne would have nothing to do with the mechanical routine of the official day. So far from keeping meticulously to office hours and dividing the day religiously between duty and private life like all the other officials, Kalahne recognized no distinction between his work and his leisure. Had he been forced to live according to a time-table he would have choked. He would often walk out of the office and go to a café or to the public library. But he always told his clerk where he was to be found, and he was always on the spot when he was wanted. This lax conception of official discipline roused such resentment among his colleagues that two months after his appointment they had openly complained. But Prätorius had protected him, made him his personal secretary and given him a status apart from that of the ordinary officials. In spite of his personal distaste for the young man Prätorius had been forced to admit that he had not come across a better worker for years. Prätorius had been impressed not only by Kalahne's unusual intelligence but by the fanatical zeal with which he set about his

work. Prätorius felt that here was a man not to be judged by ordinary rules. There seemed to be nothing that Kalahne could not tackle. He could be called on at any time of the day or night. He made no distinction between his work and his private life. Instead of closing his mind to office problems at the end of office hours, his mind was perpetually occupied with questions concerning the city. His favourite time for work was at night. For the past two years no public announcement or memorandum had been issued without its phraseology being supervised by Kalahne. The young man's command of language was astonishing. His German was flexible and succinct, and Councillor Schrader, who temporarily fulfilled the duties of mayor after Prätorius' death, still remembered with astonishment the memorandum on the canal project which had had to be submitted to the Stuttgart authorities at short notice. Kalahne had sat up and composed a comprehensive survey of the whole subject in a single night. From Stuttgart there had come not only a decision sanctioning the scheme, but a query as to who had composed that brilliant memorandum. Prätorius had given Schrader's name, for it was he who was officially responsible in the matter. Since that day Councillor Schrader had enjoyed the special favour of the Minister of the Interior.

After Prätorius' death Kalahne became indispensable to Councillor Schrader. The intelligence of this emaciated man with the blazing eyes, as Frau von Berg used to call him, lightened Schrader's task to an extraordinary degree. There was no department whose work Kalahne had not mastered in every detail. He was equally at home in questions of finance, public relief, the police or the theatre. No departmental boundaries existed for him, and he despised the specialist. The expression "outside my province" did not exist for him. He regarded it as a confession of weakness and inadequacy, and castigated its use. From his point of view he did not exaggerate when he said that local government was possible only on the basis of accurate and detailed knowledge of its various departments. Holding the reins did not suffice. It was necessary to know just as much about the theatre as about the chemical factory down in the valley. And you could not fight Communism

without an exact knowledge of its foundations. To this last assertion Councillor Schrader replied with a smile that so far as he was concerned he would leave the study of that sort of nonsense to Kalahne, with his immense thirst for knowledge. Kalahne replied that anything that influenced people was worth understanding. Power was the prerogative of him who had the capacity to select from the immense diversity of thought and phenomena; power went only to him to whom nothing was strange. It was just like war. A good commander had to put himself in the enemy's mind and consider what mistakes he might make. That was the only way he could overcome him.

Schrader smiled gently at all this "philosophy." But Kalahne acted on it.

In a short time Kalahne's authority in the city of Siebenwasser had increased to such an extent that no report or document of any kind reached the acting mayor without having passed through Kalahne's hands. He drafted the resolutions, which meant that to all intents and purposes he had Schrader under his thumb. Every day he spent one hour with him, discussing the town's business, and after that Kalahne's office hours were over and he was free to do his work in his own time and place.

His jealous colleagues sneeringly called him the Grand Duke of Siebenwasser.

Kalahne had taken a seat on the red sofa under the false Venetian mirror. Margrit brought him a cup of coffee, a boiled egg and some pastries. Kalahne read the *Frankfurter Zeitung.* The café was empty. Margrit sat down behind the counter and gazed at the grape tarts and the cream buns.

The *Frankfurter Zeitung* played an important rôle in Kalahne's life. Since his student days, though he hated it, he had read it every day. He admired its style and the admirable sobriety of its language. Here spoke the spirit of the bourgeoisie in its most gentlemanly form—clever, sceptical, well-informed, well-meaning and absolutely unheroic. Kalahne regarded the bourgeoisie as the

nail in the coffin of German destiny. In 1914 there had been a great German revolution against a capitalistic world inspired only by economic needs. But the spirit of the bourgeoisie had corrupted and betrayed it. The blood of the youth of Germany had flowed, but the bourgeoisie had made an imperialistic Big Business venture of their self-sacrifice. And then, when the united strength of the whole world in arms had turned out to be too strong for the exhausted country, they had turned, whining like bankrupt shopkeepers, and betrayed the German people to the democracies of the West.

What had the State become? An economic scarecrow, a wilderness of material interests. You only had to go among the families of the bourgeoisie and listen to the almost religious fervour with which they pronounced the words Big Industry. As if all a people was meant for was to manufacture motor-cars or dig coal. Motor-cars and coal were useful things but nothing more. They could never weld the people together to a sense of mission. Kalahne believed in the mission of the German people with all the ardour of which he was capable. He believed that he alone could give purpose and direction to the new century, strike a balance between man and his work, between the individual and the community. He believed that. But he believed, too, that nothing but the overcoming of the bourgeois spirit of acceptance would bring the people together again and give them once more that divine spirit of unrest which in centuries gone by had given Europe a constantly changing face.

He was convinced that it was necessary to destroy a peace that corresponded in no way to the human devotion of the war years and the spokesmen for which, with humanity as a whole ever upon their lips, forgot their own people.

Kalahne read the leading article of the day. In it the writer dealt once more, in ceremonious but excellent German, with that perilous goal which the Republic had inscribed upon its colourless banners—peace, prosperity and contentment.

Here you could study the enemy at his best. You could study high-class journalism trying day by day to urbanize the country,

approximate it to that way of thought which Kalahne characterized as Western.

He hated it, but he was conscious of its strength. The first step in his struggle against it was the foundation of his secret society. Eighty young men in all parts of the country unconditionally accepted his way of thought. His second step was when he made a secret pact with the generally ridiculed Party. He knew well enough that no quaint little band of conspirators, whether militant or merely intellectual, could ever by any chance achieve a sufficiently wide influence to set the minds of the people thinking along a different track. In spite of his contempt for the apparatus of democratic party government, he believed it necessary to use it in order to rouse the people to revolt.

Every means was justified that led to that end. For Kalahne believed that the struggle he was engaged in was a matter of life and death.

It was necessary to work secretly, circumspectly; to accumulate knowledge, penetrate into the State's innermost chamber. The enemy was not weak or to be despised. True, the enemy was the Republic. But it would not be sufficient to overthrow the Republic: it would be necessary to bring about a fundamental change among the people, to debourgeois them. It would be necessary to vanquish not only the Republic but the reactionaries too. The battle was on two fronts; against yesterday as well as today. But Kalahne still felt damnably alone. Few as yet were conscious of his goal. Schickedanz was a weakling and Bringolf hardly more than an ordinary well-meaning person. It would be wrong to burst out too soon. The thing to do was to sow unrest, unrest all the time.

Kalahne laid the newspaper on the table. He was excited. It cost him an effort to retain his self-control. Margrit was sitting asleep behind her counter. Kalahne struck the table with his fist, so hard that he spilled his coffee.

Kalahne bit his lip. Keep calm and don't make a scene, he said to himself.

He picked up the paper and went on reading.

It contained an instalment of a novel he had been following for the past fortnight. It was the story of an intellectual slacker, a typical member of the bourgeoisie, probably of Jewish descent. The novel was written in a spiteful manner and the author plainly had an antipathy to anything obvious or straightforward. The whole concern of the book was with the mentality of a man who ran about trembling behind the Front and was skilled at inventing clever reasons to explain away his inability to participate in the destiny of the people. But in the end he came within the clutches of the military authorities. He was stationed in a garrison town at home, and, while the tragedy of Europe's manhood was being enacted hour by hour and day by day outside, this frightened sparrow succeeded in occupying a stool in the scullery canteen and cutting himself out of the great devoted life of the German nation. If he had only kept silent about it and remained satisfied with his own body's feeble glow of warmth, it would not have been so bad. But this counterfeit of a man used his barbed wit to carp at the tragedy of a people from a vantage-point no better than that of a woodlouse.

"What he did in the Great War was to peel potatoes."

That sentence made Kalahne feel sick. He flung the paper down on the next table.

"Scum!" he said to himself. "All they want is to live!"

Bringolf came walking across the town hall square, on the left-hand side of which was the Café Adelmann. He had on his light summer suit of English linen, and in his left hand, which he swung violently to and fro as he walked, he carried a newspaper. His blond hair hung down over his flushed forehead.

Kalahne started eating his pastries.

Bringolf entered the Café Adelmann.

Margrit rose from behind the counter.

"A double brandy," Bringolf called out as he walked in.

"How fierce he looks again," Kalahne thought. "He must be very unsure of himself."

Margrit had placed the glass of brandy on a tray and was just

going to put it down on Kalahne's table, but Bringolf took the glass and emptied it at a gulp.

He licked his lips and sighed.

Then he went across to the red sofa.

"I don't understand you any longer," he said, and held the newspaper in front of Kalahne.

Kalahne took the *Siebenwasser and District Gazette* and read on page two: BOLSHEVISM IN SIEBENWASSER.

"The man who wrote that must be a lunatic," said Bringolf. "The next time I see Schickedanz I'll give him one on the jaw."

Kalahne smiled. He liked Bringolf when he was angry. His ingenuousness pleased him too. Why were good-looking men always such fools?

Bringolf leaned right across the table.

"Look here, seriously, what on earth have you done?"

"I've seen to the covering of your deficit," answered Kalahne.

Bringolf laughed.

"You call that covering my deficit? Why, at tonight's performance they'll smash my stage!"

Kalahne shook his head.

"Read it yourself, man!"

Bringolf hurriedly unfolded the newspaper, and running his finger along the lines, first murmured and then read aloud:

". . . 'the loyal and God-fearing citizens of Siebenwasser cannot possibly tolerate the flouting of all morality, good breeding and good taste by a skilful and unscrupulous dramatist. The citizens of Siebenwasser cannot allow these things to be dragged in the mire before their eyes. It is true there is no censorship; but there is the people's voice. And it is to the people's voice that we appeal. Men and women of Siebenwasser, and, above all, you young men and young women of Siebenwasser, raise your voices and free the city of the poisonous work of this presumptuous writer.'"

Bringolf raised his head.

"Well, if that won't create a scandal I'll eat my hat . . ."

Kalahne could not help laughing at the state of excitement Bringolf was in. It was extraordinary how dependent on the impressions

of the moment people connected with the stage were. To have explained his plan to Bringolf would have been perfectly useless. The best way of dealing with him would be to exert his authority and leave it at that. With weak natures that was the only thing to do. The main thing was to see that the fellow gave him implicit obedience.

"I told you to look forward to a sensation in connection with the play, and I also told you there was no better way of filling the theatre. That ought to be good enough for you. You're covered either way. You've got absolutely nothing to lose. On the contrary, you'll have made a reputation for yourself as a courageous and progressive producer, and your name will be in all the papers as a pioneer of artistic freedom. So I don't see what all this fuss is about."

Bringolf slowly shook his head.

"There's more behind it than that," he said.

The whole affair was distasteful to him. Heaven alone knew what Kalahne was up to. For months past he felt that he no longer understood him.

"Well, even if there is, there's no need for you to worry your head about it."

"But I should like to know what I'm being used for."

Kalahne leaned back and looked Bringolf full in the face. This was the first time Bringolf had answered him back, since their boyhood days when they used to sit on the grass together behind the schoolhouse reading the tales of classical antiquity. Kalahne swallowed his anger. His strongest weapon was that he never showed his feelings.

"So you feel you're being used?" he asked quietly.

Bringolf nodded. He felt that whatever happened now was all the same to him. After all, he would have to speak up some day. That secret society business belonged to his student days when, like other romantic youths, had let himself be taken in by fine and mysterious-sounding phrases. They could not stand up to the cold light of reality. Who on earth could live heroically nowadays? Airmen perhaps, but nobody else.

Kalahne looked at the young producer. Bringolf's open, healthy face irritated him. There was nothing in those eyes but a certain amount of cheerful common sense. Soon he'll start putting on fat, Kalahne thought.

"In other words you've become a bourgeois and have completely forgotten the aims for which we have been fighting?"

Bringolf started at the word bourgeois, which was used contemptuously in the theatre and in the secret society alike.

"All I want to know is what the game is," said Bringolf.

"That you'll find out when I decide the time's come," replied Kalahne.

Bringolf paused. So the thing he was in revolt against had raised its head again. He was tired of being led by the apron strings by Kalahne. He had had enough of Kalahne's Napoleonic arrogance, of the feeling of being merely a pawn in a dark and mysterious game. The whole world knew that Kalahne had brought him to Siebenwasser, and he himself knew, alas! only too well, that Kalahne had only to say the word and his contract would not be renewed next season.

"Have you such a low opinion of me nowadays that you won't even tell me what your plans are? I am at your entire disposition, as always, but I must know what's happening. That's intelligible, after all. You used to treat me differently."

Kalahne's expression did not change. He swept a dead fly from the table with his left hand.

"There will be a disturbance after the second act," he announced. "The authorities have been warned and the police on duty have been trebled. The disturbance will be suppressed, and you will continue with the play to the end. And you will keep to your programme for the rest of the week. Is that good enough for you?"

Bringolf sat open-mouthed. He was not used to being talked to like this. He crumpled up the newspaper and rose to his feet. "Yes," he said and left the café without looking at Kalahne. Kalahne grinned and finished eating his pastries.

Maria was waiting her turn at the box office a quarter of an hour before the curtain went up. A long queue stretched before and be-

hind her. Just like the war, Maria thought. She had on her peach-coloured dress, with a big artificial red rose on her left shoulder and her dark coat with the feather boa. She had had her hair waved and had bathed her shoulders in eau-de-Cologne. Her lizard shoes, which she had last worn at her sister's wedding, pinched her feet painfully.

It was a long time since Maria had set her foot inside a theatre. Eight years ago, when she had a situation at Darmstadt, she had seen *Fidelio*. Her friend, a hairdresser behind the scenes, had given her a ticket.

How Maria had quivered with excitement when the lights went out and the orchestra struck up. An almost religious awe overcame her. All her life outside vanished away when the curtain went up. She forgot the architect on whom she depended for her daily bread; she thought no more of the money she had taken from madam's bag two days ago because the old Wernecke woman refused to get her out of her trouble without it; everything faded from her mind, including even the strange glances madam had cast at her that evening, and the strange sensations she felt inside her body and her anxiety about that twenty-mark note hidden in her trunk among her pocket handkerchiefs.

The bare stage before her eyes had been transformed into a prison, in which the hero lay in chains, singing. Maria was overwhelmed by so much virtue and so much suffering. The music ravished her away. How beautiful to suffer so terribly, to be loved so much. Freedom! yearned the violins. Justice! boomed the bass. How Maria hated the prison governor. Her emotions fluctuated violently between the harmony of love and the disharmony of hate. Very soon she could hardly see; she could only hear the music, and as it rose to a crescendo and the prison gate burst open and a brilliant light illumined the stage and freedom's kiss caused the poor, mutilated soul to blossom forth into a mighty hymn of love, Maria was quite unable to applaud; all she had the strength to do was to wave her handkerchief feebly in the direction of the stage. She left the theatre, hardly able to walk erect, caring nothing for the veil of tears that sundered her from the surrounding throng.

She found madam waiting for her in her bedroom. Her trunk

had been broken open. Madam was holding the twenty-mark note in her withered palm.

"It's only because of Wernecke—" Maria managed to stammer.

"Clear out this minute!" madam shrieked. And Maria cleared out.

She carried her trunk downstairs. The architect was standing at the door in his pyjamas.

"We shan't tell the police," he whispered.

He smelt of beer, just as he did when he came into her room.

In the waiting-room at the station she wrote to her mother.

"Dearest mother," she had said. "I've been given a baby. And as I did not want it to be born into this vale of tears, and as Wernecke in the Stiftstrasse wanted twenty marks to help me out of my trouble, I stole the money. Madam discovered it and turned me out. I'm a wretched thing, but so passionate. That isn't right for poor people. God grant that the governor die soon. Then we'll all hold hands and sing. Your loving Maria."

She went to Frankfurt. Next evening she met a gentleman in the street. What he gave was enough to pay for her furnished room.

Just as Maria reached the box-office the clerk put up a notice saying that the stalls were sold out. Maria was disappointed. She had been so much looking forward to sitting in the stalls. She had sat in the stalls that time at Darmstadt; right among all the real ladies.

"Only circle left," said the booking clerk.

Maria sadly paid her one mark eighty and walked up the stone steps, lifting her silk dress a little with her left hand.

Her seat was not bad. It was in the front row. You could lean over the balustrade, and you had a fine view of the stalls and the stage. The theatre was packed. Maria took her mother-of-pearl opera-glasses from their red-silk padded leather case and looked down at the stalls. The murmur of voices came floating upwards, subdued in the expanse of the dome-shaped auditorium. People were standing about in groups among the tip-up seats. Maria recognized Councillor Schrader, sitting in a box with the lawyer,

Frank. How long ago had that affair started? About three years, Maria reflected. It had been shortly after she came to Siebenwasser and started work as a masseuse. Frank had only been a young lawyer then. He had not yet married Winter's daughter. He had been one of her best customers, for he suffered severely from rheumatism, contracted during the war. He had been a nice man, Frank had; he had lent her books and when he had no money he had treated her like a lady.

Maria searched the stalls with her opera-glasses. There they all were—Weber, the manufacturer, and Henri Jockel, mine host of the Blue Bear Inn, and Stählin, the baker. Two rows behind them Dr. Wachtel was talking to Herr Aschaffenburg, proprietor of the chemical factory in the valley as well as the stores in the Bahnhofstrasse. I'd like to have his money, Maria thought, then you'd see what a good girl I'd be.

Maria sat in her seat, absorbed in thought. The crystal lights glittered. The subdued murmur of voices floated up to her. Red tassels dangled from the boxes, and painted on the curtain was a group of young Greek shepherds, playing the flute and dancing towards a silvery cloud.

The last time I went to the theatre a change came about in my life, Maria said to herself. That was eight years ago, when they took my good name away and flung me on the streets, all because of that wretched twenty marks. What had happened since didn't bear thinking about, if you had any self-respect left. They couldn't take that away from you, even if they did fling you on the streets. And they couldn't take Resi, her little daughter, away from her either. Little Resi would be seven soon. In October. Then Maria would take a holiday and go to the Spessart, where Resi lived with her mother, and there were lovely fields and little brooks to jump over. They would get up early, at sunrise, and go into the woods and gather bilberries. And on Sunday they would go to Aschaffenburg, and she would treat Resi to an ice and let her play with the automatic machines in the station waiting-room.

Maria trembled slightly as she thought of the child. What a good thing it was that she hadn't gone to Wernecke that time.

She wondered if the architect were still alive. Resi wasn't a bit like him. And how clever she was. Once a fortnight she wrote to her mother with a stylo pen. And she even put the commas in, and her up and down strokes were beautiful.

A bell rang, and Maria woke up with a start. The stalls of the theatre of Siebenwasser lay before her eyes. Before her were the glittering chandeliers. Maria inhaled the scent of her silk dress. She forgot life outside. Overwhelmed by the glamour of the theatre, she stared at the heavy folds in the curtain, which were moving gently. Another, a better world lay the other side of it.

In her simplicity Maria had not noticed the suppressed excitement that reigned inside the theatre. When the second bell rang six policemen, led by an officer, entered the stalls. About twelve young men, wearing the badge of the Sport and Defence Society were sitting in the third row of the dress-circle. In their midst was a man wearing a brown shirt and black trousers. The young man sat in silence. Only when the bell rang for the third time and six policemen entered the circle did they look at one another and smile. The lights went out. There were two strokes of the gong. Slowly the curtain went up. Maria was so excited that she scarcely breathed. She was waiting for the music.

On the brightly lighted stage a number of men and women were talking and walking about and sitting down and getting up again just as if they were in their own homes or in the street. They might not have been in the theatre at all.

They laughed loudly, cracked jokes and behaved as though the audience were no concern of theirs.

Maria leaned back in her seat. She put her opera-glasses back in their case. She felt she had been cheated. This isn't proper theatre at all, she said to herself. Eight years ago I shivered and shook and went hot and cold all over and cried and cried and cried. What on earth is the matter? Why isn't there any music? She could hear chatter like this at home in her own village any day. It really wasn't worth putting on your silk dress and lizard shoes and coming to the theatre just for this!

Maria felt irritated. All the beautiful emotion she had felt on

entering the theatre had evaporated. And on top of it, down there in the stalls they had actually started laughing. It wasn't proper to laugh in a theatre!

Maria wanted to call out "Sh! Sh!" but there were fresh bursts of laughter and the people on the stage went on talking in a perfectly ordinary, everyday manner.

Maria crumpled the programme between her fingers. She sat in her seat, stiff and erect. Every now and then she felt laughter rising within her in spite of herself, but she bit her lips and swallowed it. The whole thing was so ordinary, so everyday. Had she come here to look at something she could have seen at home?

When the curtain came down on the first act Maria was calculating that for one mark eighty she could have bought Resi a good pair of stockings. The interval lasted scarcely a moment. Maria, disgusted and bored, took a sweet from her lavender-scented bag and put it in her mouth.

Loud, gay voices came floating up to her from the stalls. And they call themselves educated people, she said to herself.

Suddenly she heard a stage whisper coming from the back of the circle.

"Listen, when I call out 'Stop!' start to . . ."

The last word was drowned by the sounding of the gong for the beginning of the second act.

Maria looked at the stage in a huff. There wasn't any proper music this time either. The people down below were still wearing their ordinary workaday clothes and talking just as if they were in their own homes. Maria's irritation turned to anger. What on earth were they making such a fuss about? Just because a young commoner was better at love-making than a useless official? Maria had known that for a long time. She had had ample opportunity. But to put that sort of thing on the public stage! Those same people who looked down on her, and placed the greatest difficulties in her way, were now sitting in the stalls nearly doubled up with laughter. But she, Maria, had enough of that sort of thing. What she wanted was to get away from all this male business for a bit. When she went to the theatre she wanted to be elevated,

taken out of herself. It was all very well for them to giggle and titter down there in the stalls. All this smut was a nice change for them. Maria was glad to be spared it for once. But to put such a thing on the stage was simply shameful.

Next time I'll go to church, Maria decided. At least there'll be beautiful stained glass windows and God to kneel down before.

A burst of loud applause came from the stalls.

What on earth did they see in it? If a housemaid of theirs took a boy into her room at night there would be no end of a scene. But in the theatre they enjoyed that sort of thing and behaved as though it were an excellent thing for everybody. Then Schickedanz, whom in the glamour and excitement of her surroundings she had quite forgotten, recurred to her mind. Of course, Alfred had been perfectly right. This sort of thing ought to be prohibited.

Suddenly someone behind her shouted out: "Stop!"

Maria, startled, turned round. She saw a row of young men standing in the semi-darkness, all shouting "Stop!" The applause in the stalls was redoubled. Someone in the boxes called out: "Keep quiet up there."

"Stop! Stop! Stop!"

The shouting grew louder and louder. For heaven's sake, Maria thought to herself. After all, we are in the theatre. Whistling and catcalls broke out behind her. And shouting in chorus.

"Out with the Jewish filth! Out with the Jewish filth!"

Maria seized her red rose. If only nothing happens. I'm wearing my silk dress.

The lights were switched on and flooded the auditorium. The people in the stalls had all got up and were standing with their backs to the stage looking up at the circle. In the midst of the young men making the uproar, a few paces behind Maria, was the man in the brown shirt. He was very young.

How fair he is, Maria thought.

Councillor Schrader was standing in his box. His face was scarlet.

"Keep quiet!" he shouted. "What sort of behaviour is this?"

"Out with the Jewish filth! Out with the Jewish filth!" The young men shouted back.

"Hooligans!" shouted the people in the stalls.

People in the circle started clapping.

The man in the brown shirt made his way towards the right, where young Frey was standing by the balustrade. Maria couldn't stand young Frey because of his high-pitched voice. He was clapping like mad. What did a wretched Jew mean by coming to the theatre and clapping like that? And he started shouting "Bravo!" on top of it. The man in the brown shirt went up to him and said something to him. Frey went on clapping.

Maria wanted to call out: "Stop!" but by this time the Brownshirt had Frey by the arm. Frey tore himself free and grinned at him. The Brownshirt raised his arm and struck, and Frey doubled up and clapped no more. Maria, aghast, saw the police running up, their rubber truncheons in their hands. There was a sharp whistle and a sudden silence throughout the house. Everyone was staring at the circle.

"Out with the Jewish filth!" the young men started yelling again.

The police made their way towards the balustrade, where the young man in the brown shirt was still standing. The young man made a trumpet of his hands and yelled down to the silent stalls.

"The theatre isn't a bawdy-house and Germany isn't a Jewish brothel!"

"Bravo!" Maria called out, and then blushed.

"Hooligans! Take them away!" came answering cries from the stalls.

"Corrupt lot of bourgeois!" the young man yelled once more, but by this time the police had him by the arms and one of them was holding his mouth.

"Long live Democracy!" the young men yelled sarcastically.

The police, their faces white and sweating, led the young Brownshirt close by Maria. She saw his face. It was small and very young. How his eyes glowed. Maria trembled. Were they going to put him in prison? Oh, dear! She did not notice her artificial rose,

which had dropped and fallen to the ground, being trodden underfoot by the policemen.

Maria stood there as if rooted to the spot. The young men behind her had seized hands and started singing: *The swastika we proudly wear*. They started goose-stepping towards the exit where the Brownshirt was standing in front of the officer in charge of the police. There was another burst of applause from the stalls. Bringolf appeared on the stage, and was received with frantic cheers.

The audience roared Bringolf's name and the actors came out from the wings and bowed and smiled behind him. But in the midst of it the Brownshirt suddenly wrenched himself free from the policemen's grip, pushed the officer in the chest so hard that he made him stagger back and ran to the balustrade, where he stood next to Maria. She could feel his breath and see the veins standing out on his temples. Once more he made a trumpet of his hands and called out, so that his voice resounded throughout the hall:

"Germany awake! Germany awake!"

A roar of laughter was the stalls' answer.

The Brownshirt raised his right arm. How magnificently defiant he was! Maria was trembling with excitement. A hero at last!

"Germany—"

Two well-aimed truncheon blows on his head and shoulders and the man lay outstretched on the floor. But he rose to his feet again. "—awake!" he cried. The police seized him by the arm and pulled him away.

Maria screamed. Her eyes filled with tears. She ran frantically after the police. She would have liked to go for them. Her handbag fell to the ground.

The applause in the stalls was deafening. And as the chandeliers glittered and the actors bowed and the applause swelled to an ovation. Maria stood all by herself at the balustrade, hammering on the dusty plush with both her fists.

"Swine!" she shouted. "Swine!"

CHAPTER V

MARIA left the theatre as soon as the tumult subsided. In her excitement she even forgot her artificial rose, which lay neglected on the floor. She ran down the steps, fought her way through the overcrowded foyer and eventually arrived in the street via the lobby. There she found herself confronted by a cordon of police. Maria saw a lorry, without a top but with a long row of seats on either side. She pressed forward to see what was happening. She did not have long to wait. He was standing next to an officer, who was making notes. She recognized him by his brown shirt. The other young men were behind him. His back was turned to Maria. She could not see his face.

The lorry was surrounded by a huge crowd. Some of the young men there did not belong to the theatre audience at all. They came riding up on bicycles, obviously by chance, because many of them hesitated whether to wait or not, then made up their minds and swelled the crowd of onlookers.

The officer in charge of the police gave an order. Two policemen let down the lorry tailboard. The Brownshirt and the young men round him did not move. They put their hands in their pockets and stared up at the sky. The officer repeated the order. The young men started whistling softly. Then the policemen went to seize them by the arms. The young men, the Brownshirt at their head, threw themselves to the ground. Shouts of "Bravo!" came from the crowd. Everybody pressed forward to look at the men lying on the ground.

"Stand back!" shouted the officer, showing an ashen face above his stiff collar. His men picked up the young fellows and carried

them to the lorry one by one, like sacks. The Brownshirt was last. Maria saw his face. He was laughing, as though he were enjoying himself.

As soon as the official had given the order to drive off the Brownshirt jumped to his feet, leaned far over the back of the lorry, and shouted right across the square:

"This is how Germans are treated by Germans! And all because of the Jews!"

One policeman pulled him back and another held his hand over his mouth. There came an answer in chorus from among the crowd:

"Death to the Jews! Lord deliver us!"

The lorry drove rapidly across the square. The signal for the beginning of the third act sounded from the theatre.

It was half-past nine. Maria had no wish to go home. She would have liked best to run after the lorry. She wondered whether they would be sent straight to prison or taken to the police station first. Maria knew the police station. She had often been taken there for inquiries, especially during her first years at Siebenwasser. Captain Wendel, who was in charge there, wasn't at all bad. He let you have your say, and that was a good deal for a policeman.

Maria had reached the market-place. She saw the town hall and the green-lit frosted window of the police station. The lorry was outside it, empty.

Maria sat down on a seat to the left of the gardens. She drew her coat more closely round her. A cool wind was blowing through the trees. It was a fine night, and Maria looked at the stars reflected in the river. A thin layer of mist hung over the meadows. But from the vineyards upwards the air was remarkably clear, and the houses, the trees and even the branches could be made out distinctly.

To the left of the square Maria saw the terrace of the Café Adelmann. Bright little lamps shone on the tables. She could hear the music. They were playing an American Jazz tune, with much emphasis of voice and saxophone. Maria had known a musician for two years. He had visited her every week. He knew exactly

who and what Maria was. He ate with her, and took her money. One summer when he was out of a job for a long time he came and lived with her. Maria had been glad to help the young man, for she had been fond of him. She didn't even get angry with him for seducing some respectable town girl every now and then, for he was an artist, and it was part of his profession she thought.

She bought him a dinner jacket for Christmas and that had been the beginning of the end. She paid eighty-five marks for it and the salesman in the gentlemen's department at Aschaffenburg's Stores had said most particularly that it was the most expensive one they had in the shop. His lordship Willibald Pfeifer, however, had sulked because it was not made to measure. He declared that a ready-made dinner jacket savoured of poverty. That was going a little too far, even if they were in love, and Maria had gone straight up to him and smacked his face. And what does the swine do next but go upstairs, pinch another hundred marks from her trunk to pay his fare to Frankfurt, find a job in the Crystal Palace there, rise to first fiddle within three months and form his own orchestra; and then one day, would you believe it, Maria read in the *Gazette* that he and his men had been engaged by the Café Adelmann.

They had met in the street four times, and Maria had to laugh whenever she thought of it, even now. Each time Herr Willibald had hurriedly disappeared into a shop. Once, as there was no other shop within reach, he dashed into a corset shop. And he grew a moustache, as if to disguise himself from Maria. It was such a funny little mess under his nose that Maria burst out laughing whenever she thought of it. The wail of the saxophone came drifting across from the Café Adelmann. Fräulein Beraller, the butcher's daughter, would be sitting there for sure, so utterly lost in admiration of her smart, artistic fiancé that she would be letting her ice melt. May he be happy with the little hunchback's money! I'm not standing in his way. But no more musicians for me! The cowardly rogues.

The strains of the saxophone came floating across the square. The brilliance of the fine September night lay over the roofs of

the downward sloping town. Swathes of mist rose from the meadows in the valley, and the lights on the terrace of the Café Adelmann shone agreeably. But Maria suddenly started back.

Several men came out of the police station. From the similarity of their appearance Maria recognized them as some of those who had created the disturbance at the theatre. Maria shivered. The irregular light under the trees made it impossible to identify them. Could the Brownshirt be among them? She got up. Have I gone mad? she thought to herself. What is the matter with me?

But she walked towards the group all the same.

They stopped in front of the town hall steps, under the light of the big arc-lamp. Maria crossed the road which flanked the right side of the square. It did not occur to her that she was doing anything unusual in going up to people she didn't know and talking to them. As she got nearer she noticed that the Brownshirt was not among them. Without the slightest hesitation she asked:

"Isn't the Brownshirt here?"

"He's still being interrogated," was the answer.

"What about you?"

"They released us after taking our records."

The young men turned to go.

Maria asked:

"Are they going to send him to prison?"

"What's that got to do with you, you bitch?" one of the trio, who were some distance away from her by this time, shouted back at her.

Maria stood wavering in the light of the arc-lamp. The young men's footsteps echoed across the square. Maria held on to the railings for support.

"Oh!" was all she said. "Oh!"

She went slowly back to her seat. The gentle strains of a tango floated across the square from the café.

The town hall clock struck ten. Once more Maria rose to her feet. She looked towards the police station. A bare light shone behind the painted windows. She walked slowly back through the gardens with lowered head. This was the first time she had

been insulted in Siebenwasser. She had no idea who the young men were, but she had admired them for getting up and protesting in the theatre and shouting "Death to the Jews!" in the lorry. She had liked that very much indeed. And when her eyes fell upon the Brownshirt her hardened heart had suddenly felt once more that mysterious throb from which it had been immune so long. And now here it was again, this shuddering down her spine and these blushes suffusing her cheeks.

How helpless a woman is, Maria thought.

She stopped opposite the Café Adelmann. The band had stopped. The little lamps shone gaily on the tables.

Gaston Willibald Pfeifer had just raised his bow to play his evening solo from *Santa Lucia* when his eyes, already filled with complacency in expectation of well-merited applause, fell upon Maria sitting at a table on the right-hand side of the terrace. He felt a slight pain in his side and perspiration in the palms of his hands. He started his solo. Maria was sitting on the terrace.

The brute can certainly play, she said to herself, and lightly shut her eyes.

The serenade had been over a long time and Gaston Willibald was enjoying the interval that invariably followed his show piece —he always spent it at his fiancée's table—when Maria, awakened by an outburst of loud laughter, opened her eyes. Two tables away she saw the superintendent of the theatre in the middle of a group of actors and actresses. They had lifted Bringolf high in the air and, while the band played a flourish, Körner, the character actor, who was unable to refrain from striking attitudes even when not on the stage, called out:

"Three cheers for our champion of liberty!"

There was a roar of agreement, and Bringolf, his arms round the necks of two actresses, was lowered safely to the ground. The party pushed three tables together. Herr Adelmann came to take their orders himself.

Maria looked at the women. They had their hair cut just like boys and cigarettes were between their lips. Although Maria was

conscious of her sinful life and knew that no confession would redeem her, she had never sunk to cutting off her dark, heavy tresses. She was a woman, even if a sinful one, and times without number, on melancholy Sunday evenings when the tears came welling up, as occasionally they did, she wiped them away with her hair. When she was alone at home she adored combing it out and letting it hang down her back. That was how she would sit, half-naked in her room, thinking of Resi. What a comfort it was to be able to weep into one's hair. It was surely a God-given boon to women, granted to help them in time of sorrow. And those women simply cut it off! Maria shuddered. She summoned a waitress and ordered a glass of mulled wine. How loudly they laughed! How unceremoniously they laid their hands on the men's shoulders. And how they talked at the tops of their voices, as if they were quite alone, though everybody was listening to them.

Maria sat quietly in her corner, thinking of her Brownshirt. She was trembling. The band struck up. A cool autumn breeze blew across the square.

Maria called the waitress for the second time and noticed Gaston Willibald Pfeifer talking to Herr Adelmann in front of the buffet. They were glancing over in her direction. Willibald was obviously trying to persuade Herr Adelmann to do something. The actors were served with champagne. They raised their glasses, and Körner called out:

"Down with hypocrisy! Long live the freedom of the arts!"

They clinked glasses and crowded round Bringolf. People came running out of the café, beer-glasses in hand, and raised them to their lips. Bringolf emptied his champagne glass at one draught and dashed it to the ground, where it smashed into a thousand pieces. Everybody applauded, and the band played the Cannon Song from Brecht's *Beggars' Opera*.

And that's what they call freedom, Maria thought in her ingenuous, sinful heart. When a state official lies on a dung-heap and . . . takes place on the stage they call it freedom.

The waitress stood in front of her. Instead of the mulled wine

she had brought a note on a metal tray. She put it on the table without a word and went away. Maria read:

"You are requested to leave the premises as unobtrusively and as quickly as possible. The proprietor."

Maria went as pale as death. Heavily she rose to her feet and left. Nobody looked after her.

They met under the great arc-lamp which illuminated the façade of the left wing of the town hall. Jürgen Winkler was considering whether to turn right or left to find the street which led to Gerhard Träger's house. He had only arrived here ten hours ago and had tumbled right into the middle of a magnificent affair like this. The cell-leader at the technical school at Freienworth, from which he had been expelled yesterday—there was nothing to do in a hole like that anyway—had given him Gerhard Träger's address, and when he had turned up he was given a job to do practically on the spot. And it had gone off splendidly. This Siebenwasser was said to be soaked in Liberalism and Marxism. We'll soon send the sparks flying. He had seen at once at the police station that they weren't at heart all they appeared to be on the surface. That captain, for instance, was a man you could reason with. What had he said when Jürgen spoke of the great liberty movement? "You're an idealist," he had said, and looked at him in a way that wasn't at all unfriendly. Well, well, that was what they all said when they were on the point of being won over. Jürgen lit one of the cigarettes the captain had given him. These gentlemen seemed to be in clover. The captain had given him *Dritte Sorte.*

He inhaled, and decided that a glass of beer would suit him fine. He still had fifty pfennigs left.

Maria had been standing behind him for a long time without his noticing it, watching his every movement. She forgot all the evening's humiliations and insults in the joy of being near him at last.

"Did they let you go?" Maria said.

The Brownshirt turned round, and she saw his face, his blond

hair, his light skin, his sunburned throat, the strong nose over his half-open mouth.

"Oh," said the Brownshirt. "So it's you. I saw you in the theatre. That was splendid of you."

He went up to Maria and shook her by the hand. Maria trembled.

They looked at each other. A woman, a pretty face, she's not at all bad, were the thoughts that passed through Jürgen's mind as he considered the situation.

If only he doesn't say good-bye, if only he doesn't go away, were the thoughts that drummed in Maria's head.

The Brownshirt said:

"What do you say to a glass of beer after the excitements of the day?"

He stepped closer to Maria. She felt his breath. He was young.

"I've got beer at home," Maria answered, but she wanted to take the words back as soon as they were out of her mouth. She blushed.

The Brownshirt hesitated.

"Where do you live?" he asked.

"Ten minutes from here," Maria stammered out.

"But listen, I haven't got any money."

Maria burst into tears; she tried to laugh, but an ungovernable sobbing swamped her laughter. She could no longer behave or control herself, but gave way utterly and wept.

There was nothing that Jürgen hated more than women's tears. They were an unfair weapon, against which a man could do but little. Last term, when his mother and the pastor had combined to entreat him to give up the dangerous game of politics and finish his studies—on account of which the little farm in Markgraferland was heavily in debt—his mother had burst into tears, and it was precisely that that had made him stubborn. He had left the house without a word, and spent the rest of the holidays as a labourer on an estate in the Upper Black Forest.

But this woman was weeping in quite a different way. He hadn't the slightest idea who she was, and perhaps it was that that made her tears seem purer and more difficult to bear. Had he caused

them with his stupid, pert tongue? Or was this a human being sobbing because she had come to the end of her resources? Jürgen was twenty years old. He had knocked about a lot. He knew what was what, and could tell real sorrow from acting or attempts to play on one's emotions.

"Come, come," he said. "I didn't mean anything horrid."

He took Maria's arm and led her across the street. They walked through the gardens. The whining of the saxophone floated across from the café. The sky was clear and bright above the thin branches of the lime trees.

As they turned into the narrow street which led to the Old Town, Maria said:

"Really all I was thinking of was a glass of beer."

"Yes, yes," Jürgen said, "that's all I meant too."

The street was badly paved. Small steps broke up the pavement. Rivulets ran along the gutter. They were the Seven Waters, which dashed down towards the valley in narrow channels reminding one of tiny veins.

Maria was silent. She walked along quietly on the man's arm.

The tears had dried on her cheeks.

Oh, dear, she said to herself, if only he comes as far as the next crossing. If only he comes as far as the corner after next. If he only stays for a glass of beer. . . .

She became fearful that her silence might put him off, so she suddenly started talking.

"You know, I liked particularly what you shouted out against the Jews. They're absolutely shameless here in Siebenwasser. At home, in the Spessart, my father always walked right round the other way if he saw a dirty Jew coming, and old Bartel in the spinning-room said that when she was young a child suddenly disappeared from the parish, and they searched for it with dogs and police and couldn't find it. But somebody slipped into the synagogue at Aschaffenburg, it was just about the time of the Jewish Easter, and he saw a bowl filled right up to the very brim with human blood. But it didn't get out because the Jews paid the newspapers and the judges a lot of money. Even the king used

to take their money. They'll buy the whole world with their money. But in our village the peasants have got their eyes open and as soon as they see a Jew in the distance they lock the gates of their farms. If only someone came along and kicked them out of Germany. That would be splendid."

"Adolf Hitler," said Maria's companion.

"Who's he?" Maria said.

"The saviour," Jürgen answered.

They went into the house.

What luck I tidied up, Maria said to herself as she unlocked the front door. They stood in the dark passage. Jürgen struck a match.

"Just a moment," Maria said, and dashed into the kitchen to fetch a candle. She walked into the room in front of him, stood on a chair and lit the gas. The gas whistled and cast restless shadows on the whitewashed walls.

Maria pushed a chair up to the table, which was covered with oilcloth. She wiped the chair with a bit of rag, and then looked at Jürgen. He sat down. Maria went into the kitchen. He heard her bustling about outside. She came back with three bottles of beer on a tray. She put the tray down in front of Jürgen and went straight out into the kitchen again.

Jürgen helped himself and drank.

That's fine, he said to himself, wiping the froth from his lips. But what on earth does the girl see in me?

Maria came back with sausage and cheese and a fine bottle of gherkins, and put them on the table. She sat down and buttered him some bread. She sliced the sausage and prepared the cheese with pepper, salt and onions.

Jürgen helped himself. Maria sat before him, smiling. His first bite of one of her pieces of bread and butter made her happy.

Jürgen ate his fill and looked at the time.

"I've got to leave in just an hour from now—"

Maria started.

"But I'll only be twenty minutes and then I'll come straight back. Can I live here?"

"Yes," Maria stammered out, the blood rushing back to her cheeks. "I've got a room upstairs. You can stay there as long as you like."

She got up and cleared the table.

"Coffee?" she asked.

"No," Jürgen answered, "I'd rather have beer."

Maria opened the second bottle and filled his glass. Then she went to the chest of drawers and rummaged in the top drawer for cigarettes.

"What on earth have you got to go out for at this time of night?" she said. "It's very late."

"Duty," said Jürgen, his face assuming an expression which intimidated her from asking any more questions. She sat down at the table by his side and looked at him.

Jürgen smoked a cigarette.

"So it's perfectly in order with the room?" he said.

"You can stay there as long as you like," said Maria, smiling. What luck to be able to help him.

"I've got no roof over my head and only fifty pfennigs in the world."

"Oh," said Maria. She jumped up, fetched her bag and, in some confusion, laid a ten-mark note on the table. Jürgen behaved as if he did not notice it.

"They turned me out of the technical school for working for the Party. At the last election we went for a few Jews and Marxists who meddled in our affairs and then there was the very dickens of a row and they wanted me to sign an undertaking to behave myself in future. I refused, of course. Gentlemen, I said, you can discipline me as much as you like, but I stand by Adolf Hitler, and there won't be any peace till the whole of this loathsome State's blown up and there's not a Jew left with a word to say, but only the German people. At that, of course, the fat was in the fire, but I called out that I'd rather starve to death in the cause of German freedom than grow up into a fat bourgeois and that I belonged

to my Leader and that so far as the professors were concerned they could go to hell. And then they expelled me and I came here, and I must say that was a neat job this evening."

Jürgen broke off. His face was earnest and his eyes were motionless.

"You're a hero," said Maria gently. "But, you know, I don't understand a thing about politics."

Jürgen looked at her.

"It isn't politics," he said. "It's got nothing whatever to do with the trash they talk in the town halls and the cafés. It's simply a question of fresh air. We just don't want to go on living as we have in the past, you see. We must become a great people again, you see, and not a wretched, second-class nation that's got to go begging here, there and everywhere. Who eat the very butter from our plates? The Jews! Who grind down the peasants and steal the cattle from their sheds? The Jews! Who have all the big jobs in the government? The Jews, and no-one but the Jews! And who set the people against one another? The Jews! The Jews! No-one but the Jews!"

He banged his fist on the table. Maria trembled. How magnificently he spoke and how his eyes shone.

"I like you," she said.

Jürgen looked up. His hair had slipped out of place over his forehead. He pushed it back.

"What's your name?" he asked.

"Maria."

"Good. What else do you do?"

"I'm a masseuse. But I can't earn enough to live that way, so I often have to have men here, you see. It's no fun, I can tell you. But I manage to make both ends meet."

She said this quite unabashed, smiling at Jürgen.

"All right," he said. "I'm not a bourgeois and there's no moral humbug about me. So far as I'm concerned all these gentry with their five-roomed flats and all the filth behind their fine white waistcoats can go to hell."

He rose to his feet, went over to Maria and stroked her hair.

"I like the candid way you spoke about yourself," he said. "Without any sentimental nonsense. I like you. I've got nothing to eat and I haven't got a roof over my head. A fine youth to have, isn't it? And you give me a roof. And you say you like me. And I say I like you too and I'll stay here if you're willing to have me, and I'll stay in Siebenwasser and it won't be long before the whole thing goes sky-high and then we'll start real life."

"Real life?" exclaimed Maria, holding his hand and pressing it to her mouth.

"Adolf Hitler has promised it, and Adolf Hitler keeps his promises. Believe me, he is sent by God. I was next to him on the last Party Day. I tell you, Maria, he is more than human. He's far above ordinary humanity, he's superhuman."

"And what will he do?" Maria rested her head on the table, looking up at Jürgen.

"He will banish all the misery and suffering and filth and iniquity from the land, Maria. And we shall be at home in our own country again and go about our work honourably and at peace."

Jürgen bent down and kissed her.

"Oh," she stammered out. "I believe you. But you must stay with me . . ."

He turned out the light.

"My name is Jürgen," he said. . . .

Maria lay in the dark. A thin ray of light from a street-lamp penetrated the shutters. It speckled the table and the floor. It lay still on the furniture. Maria was counting. She had reached 940 and Jürgen hadn't come back yet. Good God, what a man! But I knew that as soon as I saw him knocking that Jew down and defying the police. Would he really come back? What could he be doing at this time of night? How he swallowed down that bread and sausage and how he talked! What's his name—Adolf . . . I can't remember. It's of no consequence anyway. It was something with an "i" in it. And I liked what he said about the swine with all that filth behind their fine white waistcoats. Fine gentry

they are. Have the clap and go to church. And kneel before Our Lady. Beasts. I'll keep the young man here. He can sleep upstairs and have his meals down here. I'll tell him I've got to have visitors sometimes. He'll understand. He knows. There's no humbug about him. He knows the whole swindle. Oh, he's so sweet. . . .

Maria lay motionless. She lay under the light, thinking, if only he comes back. As for Frau Franzke, who lives upstairs and owns the house, I'll manage her all right. The poor old thing does nothing all day long but sit in the parlour and stare at the picture of her son who was killed in the war. She's a little off her head, poor old thing. She puts food in front of the picture every day, and on Sunday she offers it wine. And sometimes she roasts a chicken and holds it out to him and says, "Eat, my boy, eat," and she smears the food on the photo, over the mouth. Oh, dear, one shouldn't laugh. After all, she is a mother. There was a loud crash outside. Crash! what was that? Strange, in the middle of the night. Crash! there's another. Those were windowpanes. . . . Good gracious, there's another. Crash! I'll stay where I am. It's got nothing to do with me. It must be drunks. What I want to know is whether that young man is coming back. That's one of his hairs in my mouth. It was good to watch him eat that bread. And how he talked afterwards. It was marvellous. . . . He really believes what he says. . . . Crash! . . . But what on earth is up? . . . I must buy some meat tomorrow. Cutlets, and mashed potatoes. . . . And I'll have a bottle of cherries for afterwards. Lucky I preserved them. I must give him a lot to eat. The more he eats the more he'll thrive. He can live how he likes. But he must stay with me. . . . Good heavens, Maria, what's come over you, you're mad. . . .

A couple of hasty steps, then the noise of the key in the lock. He's coming. Here he is. He's standing in the room. He's lighting a match.

"Jürgen," Maria called out. The match went out. He sat on the bed beside her. "Jürgen!!"

"It went off fine," he said. "Four plate-glass windows at Aschaffenburg's stores—smashed to smithereens."

He laughed and bent over towards Maria.

"Thank God you're here," she said. "You must stay here always."

Jürgen embraced her.

Slowly daylight came.

CHAPTER VI

THE *Braunschweig* was nearing Bremerhaven. After breakfast Irene went to her cabin to pack her trunks. She left her father below in the smoking-room, standing in front of a large map of Germany, following the course of the rivers with his forefinger and saying the names of the towns half-aloud. His eye rested on the valley of the Neckar, and Irene heard him read out:

"Heidelberg—Neckarsteinach—Hirschhorn—Wimpfen—Siebenwasser."

He spoke the words like a child, almost spelling them out, with a great ardour in his voice.

Irene slipped quietly away. It seemed right and proper that during these hours her father should be alone. As she walked along the deck to her cabin the *Braunschweig* passed No. 1 Lightship. She locked her trunks and sat on the bed. Through the open porthole she saw a thin, brownish streak on the horizon. There was a fresh breeze. The sea was calm and smooth. The *Braunschweig* moved almost silently over the sparkling surface. It was three o'clock in the afternoon and the ripe September sun shone over the sea and the mainland growing plainer and plainer in the distance. Irene left her cabin. A steward took her luggage. The passengers gathered, ready to disembark. The *Braunschweig* slackened speed. The land came nearer and nearer. There were the pointed copper green-encrusted church towers, and the willows bent inward by the constant wind off the sea.

A gong sounded. The solid wall of the quay came into view. Irene went down to the smoking-room, where her father was standing. Tenderly she put her hand on his shoulder.

"We are there," she said.

They went up the companion-way and down the gangway.

When they trod dry land Johann Kaspar embraced his daughter.

The Friedrich-Karl High School at Siebenwasser was a red unfriendly building dating from the sixties.

The majority of its pupils were recruited from the sons of officials of higher and intermediary rank, and peasant youths from the surrounding villages who intended studying for the Church. In spite of the bonhomie of its headmaster, the wine-loving Dr. Holzapfel, the institution was a most exclusive one. It was the tradition of the pupils of Siebenwasser High School to maintain the greatest reserve in their relations with the mass of the people, implying by the distance they kept that their lives were devoted to ends entirely different from those of their fellow-townsmen engaged in trade. The school was a preserve of conservative officialdom as it had grown up in the German states after the Napoleonic Wars, orientated in the direction of enlightenment, it is true, but utterly opposed to any popularization of its ideas or any breaking down of the barriers that separated its life from that of the people. True, this tradition had suffered some rude shocks. A great deal of it had been washed away by the breakers of the Wilhelm era, which had allowed a good deal of dangerous half-education to filter into the school life. But the authorities had always managed to purge the staff of the undesirable elements that crept in, and they transformed the school once more into a stronghold of the South German conservative spirit. The higher bureaucracy in Stuttgart, who to a not inconsiderable extent were products of the High School of Siebenwasser, caused a secondary school to be established shortly before the war, where the children of the local merchants, employees and the rest of the population might prepare themselves for matriculation. But the High School remained immune from the spirit of any half-education on progressive lines and the old tradition, which aimed at building up a definite type of character and not merely at turning out technical specialists, ran no more risk of being watered down. Here Plato and not the

physics laboratory or the logarithm table reigned supreme. Any head-waiter could learn modern languages, but *το κάλον κ'ἄγαοθν* in the sense of the humanities involved education in a school of severe and strenuous learning. High officials of the Stuttgart bureaucracy watched over the spirit of the school. To be denounced as reactionary gave them pleasure. They did not believe that the men of this machine age possessed a substitute for the spirit without which there can be no order or proportion or harmony. A conservative Platonism blossomed forth here in opposition to the anarchy of modern civilization. The Republic that succeeded the Empire stopped short in face of this institution. Its feeble attempt to influence the teaching staff foundered on two rocks: the united sabotage of the gentlemen in Stuttgart, all of whom remained in their posts; and the Social-Democrats' own reverence for anything that smacked of culture. The High School remained exclusive, and its staff made no secret of their repugnance for the new Germany. The movements that spread abroad among the people found no echo within those intentionally severe walls.

The members of the top form rose to their feet when Dr. Voss walked into the class-room. He went over to his desk, sat down, and looked at the boys. He looked searchingly into the face of every one of them, as he invariably did before every class. With the eyes beneath his bushy eyebrows directed upon the eighteen boys before him, he said:

"We come today to the German Constitution of 1919, the so-called Weimar Constitution. You know that you are due to be examined on the most important features of that Constitution in the matriculation examinations next March. A knowledge of civics has been made obligatory by government order, and it is my duty to instruct you in them. But I must ask you not to take the views and opinions I shall express as my own. The whole structure is one which, in its aims and its origins, I, with my past and my philosophy of life, am bound to repudiate. But that is another story, and it has nothing whatever to do with the present lesson. Sit down!"

Eighteen boys sat down and looked at their master.

Dr. Voss started reading aloud. His voice was toneless and lacked its usual trenchancy. The book from which he read was a commentary on the origins of the Constitution. It was a boring composition, interladed with dates and references.

After Dr. Voss had been reading for ten minutes not a single boy was listening. Some extracted from their satchels the volumes they had borrowed from the school library that morning and started reading. Others did their homework for next day. It wasn't long before several left their places and went to sit by their friends.

Dr. Voss did not look up from his book. The class-room was filled with a buzz of whispered conversation and occasionally there was a suppressed giggle. Eventually a boy got up and asked permission to leave the room.

Dr. Voss looked up.

"You all know you are going to be examined in these things," he said. "But if the state of your health undergoes any remarkable alteration in the course of your listening to these remarks I cannot prevent you from giving way to it. Please do not bother me with such questions again."

At this the boys burst into loud laughter. That was a real bit of old Voss, the kind of dazzling sarcasm that characterized his historical articles in the *Prussian Yearbooks*. Gradually the boys left the room. They had established a rota for such occasions. They went outside in groups of three, and while one group smoked cigarettes in the little building in the courtyard the next waited to take their places.

Hanns Diefenbach sat in the back row and took no part in the general exodus. He found this kind of demonstration absurd. Not that he stuck up for the lousy Jew-Constitution. But letting off steam with the consent, nay with the encouragement, of one's superiors did not coincide with his idea of an honourable fight. That affair three days ago had been a different kettle of fish altogether. The best members of the stormtroop had gone to the theatre and demonstrated against the mad folly of a crowd who far outnumbered them, had defied the police and got themselves arrested—all for the sake of their ideal of the new Germany. But these school-

mates of his, pert officials' sons who looked down their noses at every secondary schoolboy, had no right to behave like this, no right whatever.

Hanns looked straight in front of him. The bell would ring in eighteen minutes. Dr. Voss was snuffling away up there, intentionally labouring his explanation of what a vote of no confidence was. Hanns thought of that new man who had suddenly turned up at the disturbance at the theatre. What was his name? Jürgen Winkler. He met him yesterday at Gerhard Träger's house, when they had discussed their plans for the night exercises. He had liked that man Winkler. What was it he had said? They must win over the workers. They must be socialistic. They must cease casting amorous glances in the direction of the effete reactionaries. And Gerhard Träger had agreed, and ordered him to remain in Siebenwasser and fight for German socialism. And Jürgen had answered that there was only one thing he hated besides the Jews, and that was the reactionaries.

Jürgen had expressed what Hanns often thought. Was not his own father a victim of the class barriers that these reactionaries set up? What difficulties they had put in the path of the army captain who had married a workman's daughter. They had reproached him with treachery, as if it were treachery to marry among one's own people. Now his father lay before Verdun, and his mother was struggling along in Siebenwasser on her meagre pension. There was a mighty difference between Hanns and the other boys in his form, who had relatives in the government service or in prospering factories. They lived and talked only among their equals. What did they know of the people?

The son of Captain Diefenbach, who fell in an attack on the Fort des Tavannes, had spent long years of apprehension at the High School; not because he was poor, although his mother in her anxious care tried to keep that knowledge from him as much as she could; but he saw ahead of him the path that he must follow, the fate that threatened him. After matriculating, with the aid of some connection or other, they would get him into some students' association, and he would have to talk agreeably to the old gentle-

men who had jobs to offer, and then, if he were well-behaved and submissive, he would be launched on a career in the higher administration or in business. That, at least, was the prospect his guardian, Lieutenant Diefenbach, now spa director at Wernigerode, in the Harz Mountains, held out before him. But the prospect always made him shudder. What sort of life was that? Was it for this that his father and hundreds of thousands of others lay before Verdun?

Hanns opened his stormtrooper's manual. There they were, the sentences Gerhard Träger wrote on the fly-leaf the night he opened his heart to him. The two had walked a little way together after leaving the gymnasium where they trained for the Sport and Defence Society displays. It had been winter, and they had stamped through the snow. "What is the matter with you?" Gerhard Träger had asked him. Hanns, terrified, had stammered stupidly. But Träger had persisted. And when they had started talking properly Hanns had said that he would not and could not go on living like this. And Träger had nodded. And they had gone to the little peasant's cottage where Gerhard Träger lived. Hanns had found it all rather uncanny, because dirty jokes about this officer had gone all round the school, and his mother had told him that boys ought to avoid him. But that had only been a ruse to keep Träger in isolation. That was what the bourgeois always did. If anyone became inconvenient to them, they invariably questioned his morals.

That night had been a decisive one for Hanns. He cherished its memory, as of a revelation. Gerhard Träger had explained the new ideas to him in a few sentences, as was his way. It was the duty of Youth, and of the Unknown Soldier of the World War, he said, to lay the foundation stone of the new Realm. They aimed at a great awakening of the people after a thousand years of sleep—the Holy Realm of the German people. And Gerhard Träger had showed him the enemy, and asked him whether he would like to be a soldier of the new Realm. And Hanns, shaken by the tremendous vision of a people no longer divided by arrogance and hatred, had answered yes. It was for this they had died before Verdun—

not for the Kaiser or for the generals or for Big Business, but for this.

And here were the sentences Gerhard Träger had written, sentences that Hanns re-read whenever he meditated upon his life:

> *The situation of our country makes it necessary for men who care for the future to come together and plight themselves by a sacred oath to renounce all bourgeois advantages and prefer death for the future Realm to life in a comfortable corner.*

Hanns looked up. Voss was still snuffling away. In ten minutes the bell would ring. Hanns was just getting his things together when there was a knock at the door. Voss went over to the door and opened it.

"Diefenbach to go and see the headmaster!" Hanns got up and walked between the rows of empty desks and out into the passage, where the school porter was waiting.

"Rough seas ahead!" Rübsam whispered warningly.

They walked down the steps together.

Dr. Holzapfel was sitting over the text of a new edition of Plautus which he was checking for philological errors for a publisher when Police Lieutenant Schnebel was announced. In spite of his conservative convictions, Dr. Holzapfel despised the police, whom he regarded as but a degenerate kind of warrior. True to his Platonic ideas, he regarded warriors as a necessary evil. And now here was a half-breed of the warrior caste disturbing him at his Plautus.

"Ask the police lieutenant to be good enough to wait," he said to Rübsam. But a few minutes later Rübsam came back and said the police lieutenant could not wait. He had come on urgent business on behalf of the Chief of Police. At that Holzapfel rose to his feet, flushing a deep red. What on earth did the Chief of Police want with his humane academy?

"But Rübsam, who knew the headmaster's moods, presented him with a *fait accompli* and let the police lieutenant in.

When Holzapfel saw the man's uniform and shining helmet and

the revolver on his belt he banged his fist down hard on the text of Plautus and exclaimed:

"Please lay your weapon aside this instant, sir. The spirit of this institution tolerates no revolvers!"

Police Lieutenant Schnebel, who knew what a rum customer old Holzapfel was, having frequently come across him in wine-bars on evenings when he was not busy with his Plautus, bowed and said:

"I should never have dared to offend the spirit of this institution, sir, if an attack upon public order and security had not been hatched in it, sir."

"Sir, you are the strangest person that ever wore a helmet!" Holzapfel bellowed at him.

Without another word the lieutenant drew a piece of paper from his sleeve, placed it before the headmaster and said:

"I must ask you to send for the boy Hanns Diefenbach at once. If you refuse I shall be forced to take action myself, sir, by orders of the Chief of Police."

Holzapfel glared at the paper. His collar suddenly felt too small for his neck. He rang the bell. Rübsam came in.

"Diefenbach," Holzapfel growled, then went up to his bookshelves and gazed at the bindings of his Plutarch.

The first thing Hanns's eyes fell upon when he entered the headmaster's room was the police lieutenant, and then he knew what he was in for. He had been expecting this for days, but he went pale all the same.

There was dead silence in the room for a long time. Holzapfel did not move from in front of his bookshelves.

Schnebel cleared his throat, but with no result.

He snapped his fingers, but the old man went on staring at his books and did not turn round.

Police Lieutenant Schnebel went up to Holzapfel, put his hand on his shoulder, and said, very politely:

"The boy is here, sir."

Dr. Holzapfel turned round sharply.

"Don't you dare lay your hands on me, sir!" he exclaimed.

Schnebel smilingly pointed to Hanns.

Holzapfel was breathing deeply. The old man's powerful shoulders heaved and sank three times.

Then he went up to Hanns, and took him by the arm.

"Tell me, Diefenbach, is it true that you by your behavior in a place unknown to me—"

"At the theatre," interrupted Schnebel.

"Please be good enough not to interfere, sir! I'm the master of the house here!" Holzapfel bellowed, and then went on, almost tenderly:

"Is it true that in some place unknown to me you acted in such a way as to give this armed Praetorian the right to force his way into our school? Surely, Diefenbach, this must be a mistake?" he said, looking benevolently at the boy. My best Latin verse reader, he said to himself.

Hanns looked into the headmaster's clear, kind eyes. This was how they always shone when he read the lines about the Phaeacian Isles or translated the Platonic *Dialogues*.

"There is no mistake, sir," said Hanns, and felt quite cold inside.

Holzapfel took a step backwards. "Diefenbach!" he exclaimed. Just that one word, "Diefenbach!" Then he went over towards his bookshelves, as if in search of support.

Police Lieutenant Schnebel produced the piece of paper.

"The offence in question is a breach of the peace," he said. "On the occasion of the second performance of the play entitled *The Gay Vineyard* the schoolboy Diefenbach of Siebenwasser and a gang of accomplices in that they in the crowded auditorium resorted to behavior prejudicial to peace and order and exhorted to acts of violence were guilty of a breach of the peace."

"Be quiet!" shouted Holzapfel, angrily striking his hands together. "This is impossible! A humanist does not behave like that!"

He walked agitatedly up and down the room.

Schnebel looked at Diefenbach.

"I did it, sir," he said.

Holzapfel stopped with a jerk.

"Then you are unworthy," he said.

The old man's face was pale.

"I did it for Germany, sir!"

Holzapfel's tension relaxed. He went quietly over to the boy.

"For Germany?" he said. "That is the invariable explanation of muddle-heads, my boy. You have offended against the law. But you have done worse than that. You have offended against intellectual decency. You raised a tumult instead of seeking to convince. You have offended against Plato, in that you went upon the market-place. Everything that I have ever preached to you you have sullied and defiled, and you have mixed yourself in affairs that concern the rabble. That is what you have done. You have betrayed the school. Yes, you have betrayed it."

The old man sat down. Hanns felt his heart beating. Schnebel shifted from one foot to the other, embarrassed. Eventually he pulled himself together.

"Sir," he said, "it is not the intention of the Chief of Police to make an affair of State out of this boyish prank. We know that these young people are being led astray by certain mischief-makers, and we are anxious to establish the identity of the mischief-maker in this case, so that peace may return to Siebenwasser. If the boy Diefenbach tells us whom he took his instructions from the case will be struck off the records and we shall leave it to you, sir, to bury the matter once and for all by a reprimand."

Schnebel removed his helmet. It looked like a peace offering, but perhaps the man was only perspiring.

Hanns felt taut all over. They were putting him to the test. The hour had come for him to prove himself.

"What I did, I did on my own initiative," he said. "I took instructions from no-one. We were demonstrating against the poison abroad in the people. We were demonstrating against the Jewish spirit. We were demonstrating against the soft spirit of the bourgeoisie. We believe in the new Realm."

"All that's stuff he's learnt by heart," sneered Schnebel.

Dr. Holzapfel rose to his feet. He looked old. He went slowly over towards Diefenbach.

"Hanns," he said—it was a long time since he had last called him by his Christian name—"Hanns, you are one of my best pupils. I know your pride. You are taking blame upon yourself in order to shield someone. That is praiseworthy, Hanns, but you are sacrificing yourself in a wrong cause. You are not suffering in the cause of enlightenment. Believe me, that play at the theatre wasn't anything very special, but the action you permitted yourself was an attack on the very foundations on which civilization rests. Those foundations, Hanns, are defended by me here in this building. Our life here, Hanns, consists in not losing sight of those foundations; that is the alpha and the omega of our community; and if we are not faithful to these things one day the herd will come and swamp us, and all that we have builded will be in vain."

He held the boy by the shoulders, and shook him. Hanns stared straight in front of him. How they are testing me, he said to himself.

And as soon as the old man with the desperate look in his eyes started talking to him again Hanns shook himself free. A fierce wave of determination went through him. He openly confronted the headmaster, and, his face flushing a brilliant red, said:

"You don't understand us, sir. You do not understand the German Revolution. You are too old!"

The word seemed to hover in the middle of the room. For some moments no-one spoke. Hanns stood there quivering.

Schnebel was the first to break the silence. "Brazen insolence," he hissed, but Holzapfel silenced him with a gesture. He went up to Hanns, a deep smile on his face, and stroked his cheek.

"My poor boy," he said. "My poor boy. So that's what you think. We are too old. Everything over there"—pointing to the books—"is too old. Plato and Seneca and Augustine and St. Francis are too old. They are old, they are dead, they were in vain. Say it, for so it is."

The smile on Holzapfel's face was fearful to look upon. The spectre of youth confronted him, youth with its soul made insen-

sible by sport and scientific progress; this immoderate generation, idolizing the body, which he had watched growing up before him for years past, without intellectual modesty or humility, without the will to acquire wisdom or human enlightenment. Their bodies were beautiful—they were shrewd animals. And as he saw Hanns standing there before him, erect and with determination in his eyes, and he looked upon that candid face, without blemish or artifice, pity for all this healthy young blood overcame him; and, as had often happened before when he saw these splendid youths struggling along the path of darkness and blind pride, his heart rose within him, and he was overcome with sorrow at so much tragic aberration, at so much subtle corruption of young souls, and all his practised self-command broke down as he exclaimed:

"In the old days it was at least Alcibiades who struck off the heads of the gods and led you astray. Yes, Alcibiades, but Alcibiades at least was a renegade. But today"—and the old man's face grew rigid as he stood there stiffly, his eyes filling with tears. "But the man who has you in his power today is that barbarian, that ratcatcher the worshipper of brute force, that sorcerer . . ."

Hanns himself did not know how it happened. He is insulting the Leader, was the thought that flashed through his mind, he is insulting the Leader, and that was all. And he struck out and hit Dr. Holzapfel full in the face.

A pair of spectacles shivered to pieces on the floor. Before Hanns's eyes everything went dark. He faltered. He felt someone seizing him, and three blows descended on his shoulders. He opened his eyes and became aware that Schnebel was holding him by the arm. Before him a short-sighted old man was groping helplessly round the room.

"I shall take the necessary steps at once," he heard Schnebel say.

"No, no," the old man whispered with a smile. "Take no more steps, I implore you. But there must be a small bell on the table somewhere here, I can't find it. Ring it for me, please."

Hanns felt his arm being released. The bell gave out a gentle tinkle.

"Rübsam, my reserve pair of spectacles, please," the old man said.

Rübsam brought the spectacles. Dr. Holzapfel elaborately polished the lenses, resting his foot on a chair.

Schnebel took Hanns's arm again. "No, no," said Holzapfel with a smile, "we are not at the police station here."

Schnebel let him go. Hanns's head sunk to his chest.

I didn't want this to happen, he said to himself.

Once more he heard the headmaster's voice. It was remarkably mild and gentle.

"As you see, Hanns, I forgive you for what you have just done, and I never want to hear a word about it again"—this with a glance of appeal at Schnebel. "It was fate, Hanns, you see. You acted quite rightly. This is how it will be. You will all have to be like this. No police can stop it, lieutenant, and no law court. It is a terrible destiny to have nothing but hot blood in your head instead of sense."

Holzapfel put on his spectacles. No trace of the inner excitement that he felt was perceptible. There was a tone of deep grief in his voice. He looked benevolently down at Hanns.

"Hanns," he said, "you are all well-meaning young people. You believe Germany to be betrayed, and you want to rescue her. You will rescue her to death!"

A bell rang outside. Hanns heard the boys running down the stairs. Holzapfel spoke no word. A bust of Athene was on top of the bookcase.

The noise outside had long since died away when Holzapfel started speaking again.

"My dear Hanns," he said. "You know what I have taught you. Never suffer the mob to rule. No matter who he is, no matter what he says. But you no longer understand me. You are no longer a single individual human being, Hanns. Your hand is guided. Today nothing but a pair of spectacles has been broken. Tomorrow perhaps it will be a broken head, and perhaps the day after tomorrow the whole house will be tumbling about our ears. It is always like that, when people have nothing but hot blood in their heads, Hanns."

Holzapfel walked over to his desk. He pushed the text of Plautus

to one side and sat down with his back to the door. He started writing with a scratching nib.

"Of course, my dear Diefenbach, you will yourself see that it is impossible for you to remain in this institution any longer. Destiny has not yet gone as far as that. Perhaps in a couple of years you will come back and drive me and my Seneca from the temple. But remember that Alcibiades died in exile, and his beautiful body was nowhere to be found. Of course we will do everything to avoid any scandal, for your mother's sake apart from anything else. I shall give you a proper leaving certificate, and I don't mind telling you here and now that you were my best Greek scholar—unfortunately in grammar only, Hanns. You will be able to go anywhere in Prussia, where grammar is the main thing, and you'll soon pass your matric."

Holzapfel turned round.

"Lift your head, Diefenbach. In these times nothing can happen to people such as you. Have no fear. But one thing I do ask of you. When you have matriculated throw your Plato in the fire. And throw that soft book, the Bible, after it.

"And as for you, Mr. Policeman," Holzapfel went on, rising to his feet, "tell your chief that we have settled the matter and that we have caught the mischief-maker. The mischief-maker was the war!"

Holzapfel pointed to the door.

"Thank you, gentlemen," he said.

Hanns went out, with Schnebel behind him.

Holzapfel listened to their footsteps fading away into the distance. When they had gone his head sank down to the desk.

Another one, the old man said to himself, bursting into tears.

Hanns left the school in Schnebel's company. They stood outside the main gateway. The city lay beneath them. The sun stood high over the dove-grey roofs. The river flowed peacefully in a great loop between the fields. Girls were singing in the vineyards, and the golden-brown of autumn lay over the countryside.

"Aren't you ashamed of yourself?" Schnebel asked.

Hanns did not answer. He went away.

". . . those to whom death for the coming Realm is better than life in a comfortable corner," he said aloud as he reached the first houses.

They reached Heidelberg at about ten o'clock. Irene drove the car straight to a garage and begged her father to spend the day in the town. But Bäuerle was inexorable. He allowed one hour only. They were to have lunch at the Black Bear Inn in Siebenwasser. He had ordered it by telegram—trout.

Irene reluctantly gave in. Her father had behaved strangely throughout the journey. He did not want to stay at any one place and she had to coax and cajole him to take any but the most direct route. But she had at least managed to secure his consent to their passing from the Weser to the Rhine, from Coblenz to the Moselle valley, then back and across the river to the Lahn till they reached Wetzlar and then back again along the Rhine to Mainz. But there her father had struck. "I want to go home first," he had said. "You can go where you like afterwards."

Irene felt that she was treading enchanted ground. She had never thought that Germany was like this. They had reached the Rhine at vintage time, and father actually agreed to stay a fortnight. What was the name of the little town where they had stayed? Oh, yes, Oppenheim, with its church with windows which bewitched the light, and next to it the charnel-house with its thousands of Swedish skulls, and the vineyards above.

They stayed at a simple little hotel, and every morning they drove into the country, where the villages lay in the hollows and the watchmen on the hills frightened the starlings from the vines with noisy old shooting irons.

In the cool of evening they would sit in the low-ceilinged country inns, and her father would listen to stories of the war and the terrible inflation years. They were talkative people in that part of the country, and the girls with whom Irene often sat and talked in the kitchen chatted about their young men without any bashfulness. Irene went to several of their dances while her father sat over his

glass of wine, talking to the peasants of America, of the ruthless life of its towns and the enormous expanse of its farms. Peasants would come from all over the neighbourhood to listen to him. They would sit in a circle round the table, in the middle of which there stood an earthenware jug of wine. The men would pull slowly at their pipes, and not disperse to their homes till well into the night. These were Rhenish-Hessian peasants, and they liked the American when he talked of the false excitement of the world, of the wicked demon of unrest which always seized people who possessed bad land.

And they nodded when Bäuerle, under the agreeable influence of the wine, banged the table and said:

"You know, that's why the Prussians are still like that. The bad land is still in their blood. It is handed down like a poison and they never get free of it. I swear that if ever vines grow in Kottbus there'll be peace."

The peasants understood what this man told them. Many of them, in spite of the war and the occupation, still had hanging in their rooms a picture of the Emperor of the French who beat the Prussians. And when the Separatists came many would almost have gone over to them had they not had Negro guards and put arms into the hands of the rabble. Many a peasant had taken counsel with himself at that time, and wondered whether it would not be better for his farm and for his children if they turned their faces from the east, whence the war and the great inflation swindle came. The vague feeling that the devil was in control in Berlin almost brought them to the point of revolt. But the French were in the land, and that sufficed to silence them. They were not traitors, but their hate remained. "The Marxists rule in Prussia," they said, and when Bäuerle asked what they meant by that they replied: "They want to take everything away from us." That was how their hatred of the Prussians found an outlet.

Meanwhile Irene went among the vineyards as though she had been born in the country. Nothing seemed strange to her, neither the hills nor the villages nor the avenues of poplars nor the little riverside towns and pastures. She often said to herself: I have played in front of this church or prayed before this Madonna. She

succeeded in coaxing an extra day out of her father again and again. Her enjoyment of the country gave her father great pleasure. Now I needn't be afraid of her being unhappy here, he said to himself.

One Saturday they arrived at a village in the depths of the country, not far from Alzey. It was midday. The sun shone gently above the houses. They found the rectory, overgrown with ivy, near the church. They rang the bell and a plump woman opened the door. When Johann Kaspar said they came from America it sounded like a joke. The plump woman pointed to the cellar. His reverence was down there, she said, and closed the door. Johann Kasper went to the cellar, where he found two men fumigating barrels. Bäuerle inquired which was the vicar. "I am," answered the elder of the two, coming up some steps. Were they disturbing him? asked Bäuerle. What was it they wanted? asked the vicar, wiping his hands on his green apron.

"We've come from America and want to enquire after a family named Schmittchen," said Bäuerle.

"Schmittchen I or Schmittchen II?" asked the vicar.

"We don't know," said Bäuerle. "All we know is that the name is Schmittchen."

The vicar came up the steps and they walked across the lawn. They waited for a few moments outside the house, and then his reverence came out, wearing his cassock.

When they were in the vestry the vicar said the parish registers didn't go very far back. The last fire had been in 1814, and they hadn't been able to save much.

The vicar opened the heavy volumes.

"Pauline Schmittchen, if I'm not mistaken," said Johann Kaspar,

The vicar did the searching. Carefully he turned the pages on which details of people's lives were noted in painstaking writing. He moistened his finger before turning each page.

"Pauline Anna Josepha Schmittchen, daughter of Baptiste Schmittchen and his wife Anna, born Weilchen. Baptized October 15, 1849. Received her first Holy Communion April 9, 1861. Married Amadeus Bäuerle of Siebenwasser, formerly of Württemberg, travelling through the district, June 23, 1868."

The vicar closed the book.

"She was my mother," Johann Kaspar said, and went through the vestry into the church and looked at the altar and the wild flowers upon it.

"Are there any Schmittchens left in the village?" he asked when he came back.

"Schmittchens II, yes, but no more Schmittchens I," the vicar replied.

"Were we Schmittchens I?" Bäuerle asked.

The vicar nodded. "They were poor peasants," he said. "They moved into town and were never heard of again."

Silently Johann Kaspar walked with his child through the village of Erlenbach. He gave the vicar five dollars. For the poor peasants, he said, and his reverence hurried into the house and fetched wine and bread, and they ate and drank, but talked little. And they walked along the churchyard, with its weather-beaten gravestones. Many of them had collapsed, and grass grew between the graves.

"They moved into the town and were never heard of again."

That was what had happened to his mother and to his father and to him, Johann Kaspar too. The land from which they came had forgotten them. The traces of his family had been blown to the winds. But he was still alive. He had come back. And Irene would be a new beginning.

Silently they climbed into the car, which they had left under a ripe apple-tree a hundred yards outside the village. Bäuerle drove slowly down the curving road to the valley. Irene leaned back.

"Father," she said quietly. "Now I know why I'm so happy here."

The river gleamed in front of them, and behind them the village basked in the light of midday.

CHAPTER VII

THE widow of Captain Diefenbach lived in three rooms in the Uferstrasse. She had stayed on in Siebenwasser after her husband's death. Her meagre pension was not sufficient to enable her to move, and anyway, where was she to go? Her relatives on her mother's side, who were peasants in the Cassel district, were close-fisted and stingy, and her father's house in Celle would have been too depressing for her and her son. Her father, Hartwig, the cooper, had taken to drink since her mother's death and when he felt in the mood for it he would beat the dreadful woman who kept house for him when he came home from work. The woman was a former waitress from Stettin and had become his mistress during her mother's lifetime. He had set her up in Hanover, and that was where her father's money gravitated, while at home they had to suffer privation in silence. When the young officer appeared on the scene it had seemed like a deliverance. It started with a mild flirtation, of the kind common between town girls and military men, but before long Hertha discerned that this young officer represented the opportunity of a lifetime. Shortly before the autumn manœuvres Herr Hartwig, a large man with a reddish beard, presented himself to the captain and gave him politely to understand that either he must marry his daughter or he, Hartwig, would remorselessly expose the shame he had brought upon his house. Diefenbach was a gentle soul. He married Hertha and accepted the penalty of being transferred to Siebenwasser into the bargain. Hanns was born six months after the marriage. The captain's family ostracized him, but the officer put up with it, for Hertha was a fond wife and the child thrived under the South German sky.

The captain became a popular figure. He had a reputation for generosity, and often went about in mufti. When the war broke out he was one of the few men in the town who kept their heads and their dignity in the enthusiasm and the tumult. He marched quietly to the station at the head of his company of riflemen, and as the train bearing his regiment to Lorraine steamed out of the station amidst a scene of popular frenzy, he stood pale-faced at the window of his compartment, and gazed down at his son clinging to his mother's arm and laughingly catching the flowers that he threw down. He was wounded on the Aisne and lay in hospital at Kreuznach for six weeks. He did not talk of the war. He was a quiet man, and when they asked him how long the war was going to last, he always answered:

"It will last for ever. Things will never be the same again."

Hanns's last memory of his father was of a morning in Münster-am-Stein. The little boy asked a hospital orderly to build him a toy town of sand and stone, and called it Paris. And he stood on a slight eminence and flung stones at it, and the little building collapsed beneath the ferocity of his bombardment and the neat symmetry of its streets was hopelessly spoiled. And that gave him great pleasure. But suddenly his father, who could walk with the aid of a stick, came hobbling over towards him, and snatched the stones from his hands and beat him, beat him for the first time in his life. And that night he came to him as he lay in bed, and told him how he and his men came one evening to a town which had been shot completely to pieces. And they laid themselves down to sleep in the cellars of the demolished houses, for they were dead tired. But he woke up in the night, having heard a moaning. And they cleared away the debris and found a child lying on a kitchen floor, a little boy as old as he, bleeding from the chest and legs. And in his arms he held his little sister. She was dead, and could no longer speak. And in the passage they found the children's mother, her head shattered by a beam. Was that the kind of thing to make a game of? And Hanns hid his head under the bed-clothes. All night the image of that little girl haunted him. A fortnight later his father went back to the

war, and scarcely a month passed by before he found his mother collapsed over a telegram on the kitchen floor.

Frau Diefenbach bore her loss heavily. She sat for night after night in front of her husband's photograph, which hung over her little writing-table and was draped with crape and laurel. She knew what this man had sacrificed for her. He had sacrificed a career, for he had been a good officer. He had sacrificed riches, for in those days at Celle he had been a guest at all the big country-houses. The last time they had been together at Münster-am-Stein she spoke to him of all this in the night, and wept because he was so good to her and renounced so much. And now he was dead—because of her. For but for his marriage he would never have been assigned to a rotten regiment like that. He would long since have been a major on the staff, and he would not be lying dead in a hole in the clay, his kind, gentle hands in the dirt.

After a month of heavy mourning, Frau Diefenbach resolved to atone through the child for her supposed guilt. Hanns should take the place of his father and fulfill him.

Then there came the collapse and later the inflation. The slender capital she still possessed from home melted away. The pension the new government paid her for her dead husband scarcely sufficed for rent and food. The boy grew up, making all the demands of childhood. Hertha Diefenbach started sewing. At first she worked for herself and her child, then for a few acquaintances, soon for a linen warehouse. She would sit before the linen work for hour after hour, white trousseaux running through her hands, for the spoiled post-war *nouveaux riches* liked having their monograms engraved on their garments by the poor captain's widow. Was it not kind of the wealthy Herr Aschaffenburg to entrust his daughter's trousseau to this unfortunate woman when Schneider and Company in Stuttgart would have done the work in half the time? And was it not nice of Frau Winter to allow Frau Diefenbach to make her underclothes, although there were always delays and the woman had not the slightest idea of the latest fashions?

Hertha sewed, and when her eyes threatened to close with fatigue she would walk over to the bed, where her son lay in pink-cheeked

sleep; and then she would go back again to the kitchen, to the linen and the silk.

So life went on, stitch by stitch. And the sympathy was harder to bear than the want.

For many years Hertha Diefenbach found comfort and strength at Pastor Möller's prayer-meetings. Twice a week she would go to the little meeting-room in the parish hall. Old maids, daughters of high officials and superior officers, who had come down to letting rooms and selling their furniture bit by bit, small *rentiers* and former house-owners who now lived in attics on public relief, old artisans, who had sold their businesses in the expectation of a peaceful old age and were now burdens on the shoulders of their sons—such was the congregation that sat on hard chairs and prayed with Pastor Möller. These were depressing gatherings, and it often seemed to Hertha that her hatred of mankind was greater than her love of God.

It had been old Fräulein von Klassen, daughter of a major-general, who had first taken Hertha along to the prayer-meetings, and, although there was not a single member of the congregation who was not far older than she, their company and Pastor Möller's homilies soon grew upon her and became necessary to her existence. Where else was there justice in the world except with God? True, He worked in a mysterious way and His vengeance was slow, but not one of these victims of the inflation doubted that in the end the injustice by which they had been deprived of security and peace and, above all, of their proper station in life would be undone by divine intervention. They sat in their places like vindictive and inexorable mummies. Their prayers were secret curses, and they seemed to be strangling an unseen enemy when they folded their bony hands in prayer. Hatred flashed from their eyes, hatred lurked behind their words; in hatred they awoke, and in hatred they turned out the light and laid themselves down to sleep.

Hertha was often startled by the denunciations of the new Germany she overheard. The old maids, who still arranged a decorative curl on their shrivelled foreheads and dressed as they had

when they were young, were particularly savage in their denunciations. They vied with each other in inventing new torments. The ministers, the bankers and the Jews ought not merely to be placed against a wall. No, before that they must be whipped. And after being flogged until they were half-dead, they must be slowly bled, just as they had bled the people. They imbibed with spectral lewdness the curses of the Old Testament. They did not sigh for Jesus. All they cared about was the driving of the money-changers from the temple.

Hertha carried her burden of sorrows to these prayer-meetings for year after year. In this place her fate was understood. She had no need to take alms here. Here she was among her equals.

She often visited Fräulein von Klassen, who lived in the attic of her old villa, the first and second floor and the garden having been let to Baer, the lawyer. The room with its sloping walls was chock-full of furniture dating from the eighties and military pictures and vases filled with artificial flowers. It was in this dusty attic that Hertha learned to hate. It was here that she read the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, and learned of the abominable conspiracy to which the German people had been sacrificed. Pastor Möller often came up to the attic too. He would plunge eagerly into the conversation and prove that many of the sayings attributed to the Saviour, who was certainly no Jew, were later interpolations by Papist priests, who wanted to lead the people astray and make them as gentle as lambs. But Pastor Möller exhorted them to have patience. God would hearken to the people's wishes. On one occasion when he said this Fräulein von Klassen shut the Bible with a bang and exclaimed in the pastor's face:

"Very well, then, the time has come to help ourselves!"

Pastor Möller went away, and from that day on the old maid attended his prayer-meetings no more. She made herself a little altar in the corner of her attic, and before the crucifix she placed the photograph of a man whom Hertha had never seen. A shudder went down her spine each time she glanced at the eyes.

They were staring eyes, and they seemed to pierce her through and through, as though they were seeking something. Hertha was

thirty-six years old. Under the spell of this man's eyes she felt a tingling in her blood for the first time for many years.

The old maid knelt before the altar, clasping the photograph in her hands. Her aged mouth kissed the glass. The flush of a new life suffused her cheeks.

Hertha was just going to leave the room as quietly as she could when the old maid beckoned her. Hertha approached the altar, and the old maid drew her towards her with both hands.

"Kneel, my dear," she whispered. "Kneel. He has been sent by God."

That autumn Hertha heard from her husband's family for the first time. After their marriage her husband never talked of his relatives. No word came from them when the child was born or when Herbert fell and her life of wretchedness began. All she knew was that they lived on a big estate in Lower Silesia, and that her husband had renounced all claims to his inheritance. Only once did Herbert mention his family, and that in a letter written a few days before his death, and then he had called them pious but evil.

One afternoon there was a ring at her front door. Hanns had just come home from school, and he ran and opened the door. He came back and said it was a man who said his name was Diefenbach. Hertha dashed to the door in trepidation. Thoughts long since buried crowded impetuously into her mind. Had he come back? Two years ago in Heilbronn someone had come back, after being missing for seven years. She grew cold about the knees and gripped the kitchen-table. The blood rushed from her head.

Herbert came in. Hertha collapsed in a faint. When she came round she was lying on the sofa in the living-room. Hanns was holding vinegar to her nose and Herbert was feeling her pulse.

He bent over her. Hertha closed her eyes, dazed. Then she heard her husband's voice.

"I made a mistake in not letting you know in advance that I was coming. My resemblance to my brother was always very striking. We were often taken for each other as children."

He dropped her hand and laid it on her breast.

Hanns took the bottle of vinegar back into the kitchen.

"A fine boy," the man said. "It's on his account that I've come!"

Hertha went into her room without speaking. For a long time she lay on her bed and wept. It was as if her husband had died a second time.

When she went back into the living-room the child and his uncle were sitting silently at the table, playing chess.

The Diefenbach family had decided to pay seventy-five marks a month towards Hanns's education. That is, of course, assuming they were satisfied with the appearance of mother and child. He, Heinrich Diefenbach, cavalry captain on half-pay and proprietor of Langenweida Castle, had been commissioned to carry out the preliminary reconnoitring. Should it turn out satisfactorily he was to bring them both to the annual family gathering, which was to take place in Munich this year.

Two days later a large motor-car came for Hanns and his mother. Hanns was allowed to sit in front, next to the chauffeur. They were driven to Munich, and the same evening Hanns was inspected by all his aunts and uncles. No one took much notice of Hertha. She was given money and advised to look round the town. When they fetched her son from the hotel early in the morning and did not bring him back till late at night, she bore it in silence. She wandered wearily through the museums, watched the leaves falling in the English Garden and ate in the brasseries, agitated and alarmed at the glances men cast at her and the huge portions she saw being consumed all round her. While waiting for Hanns in the evening, she sewed.

It happened late one afternoon. A cool breeze blew down the Leopoldstrasse and swayed the foliage between the fountains in front of the university building. The crimson hues of early evening tinted the house-fronts all the way down to the Hall of the Marshals.

Hertha walked from one of the little side streets which run like tributaries towards the English Garden. She stopped still, mildly alarmed by a crowd that had gathered round an advertisement

pillar. Blue trams and motor-cars dashed by her in a never-ending stream.

They had fetched the boy early that morning, to take him for a car-drive to the castles. He wouldn't be back till late that night. This was the third day the Diefenbachs had purloined her child. They took him to expensive restaurants and theatres. They behaved as though the boy belonged to them, as though she, his mother, were scarcely more than his nurse, whom they could put off with a few marks, like a servant. She suffered all this in silence, for she did not grudge Hanns the excursions and the good food and the glittering of the chandeliers. The boy had lived only too long in the grey drabness of their poverty.

But today she realized what the Diefenbachs were aiming at. They wanted to make Hanns one of themselves; she was no more than the bearer of the child. Hertha had come upon the crowd of people round the advertisement pillar just when she was on the point of turning down the road which led to her hotel, to spend the evening waiting for Hanns in her joyless room. Hertha stepped closer, and her eyes fell on a placard printed in the colour of spilled blood.

In the middle of the placard she saw once more the face that had looked at her from Fräulein von Klassen's altar. There they were, those burning eyes that caused the tingling in her blood; and she read that this very evening at a big hall in Munich this man was going to make a speech on the betrayal of the German people.

The dome-shaped hall of the Circus was overcrowded, though Hertha arrived at twenty minutes to eight. Throughout the hall, right up to the gallery, there was standing room only, and more and more people still seemed to be thronging in. A band was playing and flags were hanging from the walls. "Germany awake! The Lord deliver us!" was written in white letters on red streamers which stretched across the hall. Hertha managed to force her way to near the platform, where men and women were standing in densely packed rows. Hertha took her place among them. Her weakness had suddenly vanished. She no longer felt alone. She

felt strong among this mass of people who surrounded her and to whom she belonged.

The music stopped abruptly and a bugle-call rang out. The whole audience rose. To Hertha it seemed as though a giant were rising to his feet. Not a sound could be heard. Thousands of eyes stared at the little door by the right exit.

Then an electric shock seemed to strike the row of people among whom Hertha was standing. Footfalls approached softly across the sand which was strewn on the planks. Hertha heard the gentle impact of the boots, saw the black-polished uppers, the thick legs, the broad hips. She raised her eyes and saw the thick-set, brown-shirted torso, the breast-pockets, the shoulderstrap, the soft, weakling's chin, the tense mouth and, lastly, the eyes. And then he passed close to her, and for a second she caught his glance. And once more she felt as she had felt before the altar. She almost swooned with pleasure at being in the man's presence.

He walked past, smiling and pale, carrying a whip in his hand. What followed seemed to Hertha like a dream. She heard a tumultuous roar of voices all round her, and then his voice. It was more than she could bear. She leaned against a pillar and trembled at his every word. It was her body, not her mind, that he captivated. She throbbed and quivered like a sounding-board to his rush of words.

"The people are betrayed! The Jews are exploiting the people! Those who perished in the trenches before Verdun perished in vain! Our rulers are a pack of criminals! Aliens devour our money. In their ill-gotten patent shoes they dance with the daughters of Mammon. But we have awakened. We know no mercy. We are gathered together to demand retribution. We demand retribution for the life that has been stolen from us, for the industry of our fathers, for the death of our husbands and our sons."

The roar that filled the hall made Hertha think the pillar behind her had collapsed.

"And if the wolves in black cowls come to you and whisper to you that suffering is pleasing to God, do not believe them, for they lie. And if they tell you that this world is a vale of tears,

answer them and say, yes, it is a vale in which poor people shed tears. But we have had enough. We have had enough of resignation. We are awake!"

So terrific was the applause that it seemed to Hertha as though the dome were groaning beneath a series of terrific hammer-blows. She closed her eyes, and added her voice to the tumult. No man had ever possessed her as this man possessed her now.

"And if they tell you that it is wrong to attack the State, answer them and say, this is no State which gives us alms instead of justice; and if they tell you you should be loyal to the government, say that this is no government which stole the hard-saved money from your pockets. And if they tell you that it is wrong to hate, laugh at them and say hatred gives one strength; say, Hatred is the only thing we have to live for; hatred of you is the only thing that gives us hope; not until you perish shall we arise!"

A spot-light was turned on the speaker. There he stood, only a few paces from Hertha, raising his right arm. And in front of him they stood in their thousands, this mass of disillusioned people, whipped to a frenzy now, standing there in their worn garments, relics of a former prosperity. They raised their right arms, and there was a forest of raised right arms, and they sang, and many went down on their knees, and the singing swelled beneath the dome, and Hertha sang too: *Oh! little troop, do not despond!* And the man on the platform stood there, motionless. He stood there all alone. Like God on the mountaintop.

Hertha reached the exit. All round her were rapturous people. And when he stepped into his motor-car outside Hertha saw old women kneeling on the pavement and men weeping and not being ashamed of their tears. It was towards eleven o'clock when she got back to her hotel. Hanns was sitting on the bed half-undressed, and she went up to him and embraced him. And when he told her that the Diefenbachs had told him that his father had been her, his mother's, dupe and that he, Hanns, should leave his mother and go and live with them on their estates, Hertha went down to the reception clerk, paid the bill and went back to Siebenwasser next morning. On the way home in the train Hanns said

he would rather have gone home on foot than have stayed in Munich another day.

Hertha went back to her work. She sewed all day and half the night. But everything was transfigured now. Her poverty no longer seemed hopeless. There was no need to wait for Pastor Möller's divine retribution now. She would sit in the kitchen and read the words of the man from Munich. What were the promises of the Bible compared to his promises? This man wanted to force happiness upon this world. His promised Judgment Day would take place not up in the clouds, between heaven and hell, but here in Germany, in Siebenwasser, in the Uferstrasse. Hertha cleaned out the best corner of her living-room, placed a chest of drawers in it, covered it with a white linen cloth, strewed flowers on it, put her crucifix with its sham marble base in the centre and hung a picture of the man who promised justice during this life in front of the Passion of Our Lord. Often, when dispirited by the daily round, she would gain new strength from the man's eyes, and during the lonely nights on which she longed for love she would dream of the sacred moment when he had looked at her in the Circus at Munich.

She no longer attended the prayer-meetings, and she rarely went to church. She read the man's speeches and thrived in the thought of the impending day of reckoning.

And when Pastor Möller remonstrated affectionately with her for giving up the prayer-meetings, she smiled and said:

"He has returned to the earth again, Herr Pastor!"

Hanns hurried home. He ran, for it was late and he had to be at Gerhard Träger's at three o'clock for a conference. The night exercises were to end with a solemn pledge of loyalty to the S.A., a branch of which was to be publicly established in Siebenwasser from this day on. The tedious disguise of the Sport and Defence Society was to be done away with and from now onwards they would all be soldiers of the Leader.

A sudden fear went through Hanns's frame as he turned into the Uferstrasse and saw the house in which his mother lived. So

far as he was concerned, his conscience was clear. He had suffered for Adolf Hitler, and there could be nothing finer than that. But would his mother understand? Here he was, expelled just before the matric, and it was all over with the university. True, she loved the Leader. True, she was a member of the tiny local group, and was ready to starve if it would help the Movement. But would she understand what he had done? Was it possible for a woman to understand this sort of thing? Could a woman really know what it meant to sacrifice oneself for the Leader?

He crossed the yard. A smell of onion sauce came from the kitchen. He went along the passage and saw the light behind the stupid painted windows. He reached the landing and saw his mother sewing in the kitchen.

He went in. The potatoes were waiting for him on the hearth. His mother looked up and saw him.

"I've been expelled from school," Hanns said. His mother rose to her feet.

"It's all up with the matric," he said. His mother went over to the boy.

"He insulted the Leader, and I had to hit out. I don't know how it happened, it seemed to happen on its own—"

"You did quite rightly," said his mother, embracing her child. She stroked his hair. His hair was soft and fair. For a long time they did not speak.

Hanns sat down and ate his potatoes and onion sauce. Hertha went on with her sewing.

And as the boy ate the meagre meal the widow said to herself: "What good fortune to be allowed to suffer for him."

She left the boy to go on with his meal and went into the living-room. She stood before the altar for a long time.

"I give you my child," she said, addressing the picture.

Then she scattered flowers before Adolf Hitler's portrait. She was happy in the enjoyment of her sacrifice.

Irene handed over the wheel to her father soon after leaving Heidelberg. They had stayed in the town for exactly an hour, and

Johann Kaspar had not been able to stand it another minute.

"What on earth is there to see here?" he exclaimed when Irene wanted to look over the castle. "We're home!"

They drove along the winding river. The road wound gently between the meadows. People were singing in the vineyards and flags fluttered from the villas.

Irene looked at her father and then at the speedometer. Forty-five, fifty, fifty-five, sixty miles an hour, it read. The wind cut shrilly across them and the trees rushed by.

Johann Kaspar was at the wheel. This was life. How the car flew. He was on his way home, home.

Almost fifty years ago I walked along this road with my mother on the way to visit uncle, who used to hire out boats in Heidelberg. And mother had cold pancakes in her apron, and we ate them sitting on that bench, and mother let me throw flat stones into the Neckar and watch them bounce. And when the glee-clubs went by in the river steamers I always bawled out too. I always yelled "Hurrah!" when they sang out of tune.

Neckarsteinach, oh, thou my Athens. . . . I must stop here. Even if the food in Siebenwasser is burned to cinders.

He stopped the car, and went up the white steps of the inn. Irene walked slowly behind him. The sun shone on the terrace. The river lay below. The woods smouldered in the fiery tints of autumn.

"One day when we didn't have any money and my father was very depressed, he said that if ever his ship came in he would go to Athens and drink Lachrymae Christi."

The waiter brought the bottle. It was a sweet, heavy wine, as sweet as a poor man's dream.

Hanns left home at about two o'clock. His mother had spread two extra rolls with dripping for him, and he put them in his bag, which hung from his shoulder by a leather strap. Then he walked a little way along the Uferstrasse and crossed the viaduct, and now he was walking on the right bank of the river towards the village of Erlenbach.

The wind combed the waves of the Neckar and masses of midges swarmed above the rushes.

Hanns walked along the edge of the stream, swishing his stick through the grass. He was wearing the green shirt of the Sport and Defence Society, with its leather shoulder strap straight across the chest.

The road curved round a wooded hill, which protruded right down into the valley and hid Siebenwasser from the west. Hanns sat down on a stone seat, which stood on the high-built shore and had served for many centuries as a resting-place for peasant women taking their vegetables to market in tall baskets. It was half-way between Siebenwasser and Erlenbach and marked the boundary of the city's jurisdiction.

Hanns was not taking things lightly. He knew that this day was a turning-point in his life. His mother had sanctioned his deed, it is true, and had stood by him like a loyal comrade and fellow-warrior; but the eighteen-year-old lad had sufficient intelligence to know that the full responsibility of what lay ahead rested on his shoulders and his alone. He, Hanns Diefenbach, had come of age today. He had placed himself in the ranks of men. In smacking his headmaster's face he had shattered the edifice of his childhood.

True, there was the Party, the S.A., to which he and the others were going to swear an oath of allegiance that evening. Above all there was the Leader, that unparalleled human being who had succeeded in restoring a meaning and a purpose to the lives of so many who had ceased to believe in anything. He was the new life, the centre of the faith of youth; with him one felt alone no more.

Hanns drew figures in the sand with his stick. Stupid of old Holzapfel to reproach him with Plato. Had they only dead men to set up in face of the living? But he regretted that blow all the same. That was the worst of it; he regretted it. Again and again there recurred to him that picture of the short-sighted headmaster groping round the room. He must beat down this feeling of shame before going to see Gerhard Träger. Was there still too much

Plato inside him, too much sloppy humanitarianism? It was all very well for all those peasant lads and shopkeepers' sons to talk. They had not been to school with Holzapfel, lived those hours when the old man tremblingly read from the *Symposium*, his voice remounting through the centuries; into the eternal present of the Greeks, as he called it.

No one can help me, Hanns said to himself. I must work this out for myself.

The son of Captain Diefenbach sat still on the seat. His father was dead and the Leader was far away. A few yards below him the river flowed round the hill in a fine curve. At home his mother was as poor as ever, no longer grey and embittered, but happy in the hopefulness of the struggle to come. It was the Leader who had achieved this; it was the Leader who was the cause of his mother's wearing bright dresses again; it was thanks to him that a wreath of flowers and no more crape hung round his father's portrait. It was light in their house now. The haunting spectre of their poverty had undergone a transformation. It lay gilded in the prospect of the justice the Leader promised. And at last their hunger had a reason in it; and poverty was no longer shameful but honourable.

But if Hanns had said he felt at peace he would have lied. He felt scruples about what he had done, he felt as if he had lost something. What it was he could not exactly say. But the uneasiness inside him grew, and as he thought about his father he felt restless, unsure of himself.

Hanns sat there without moving, staring at the forest on the opposite bank, where a jay hung motionless over the trees.

"This is Erlenbach," Johann Kaspar said to Irene as he drove into the village at scarcely slackened speed. It was midday, and the streets were empty. There was old Adam's house, all askew just as it was forty-five years ago. There was the church with its copper-beech and its memorial to departed warriors, and next to it there was another memorial now, a pillar of white stone surmounted by a steel helmet, and there was the village pond, green

with weeds and surrounded by gabbling geese. Bäuerle sounded his horn. The car leapt forward along the deserted main road. Johann Kaspar leaned back. He knew this stretch. He saw the apple-trees, and the meadows with the alder-bushes, and the red sandstone viaduct. And there was the hill behind which Siebenwasser lay. For a fraction of a second he shut his eyes. For a fraction of a second he saw once more the cowslips, the hips and the stag-beetles. And he saw Jockel in the wood, pressing his ear to the ground, listening for the approach of the enemy. And he saw the wounded jay in the bushes, and himself hitting it on the head with a stick because he wanted its beautiful feathers for his hat. And he remembered that business of the plague of cats. They caught them and put them in sacks and beat them to death in the sandpit, two hundred of them, and he ran away, for the creatures screamed and the knacker's men had to go on thrashing the sacks for nearly four hours before the last cry was extinguished. And he saw the meadow where they threw the coloured eggs at Easter, and the rabbit holes and the hamsters' burrows and the cress growing in the brooks.

Johann Kaspar opened his eyes. In a few minutes he would be round the hill and his eyes would rest on Siebenwasser. In a few minutes he would be home.

Suddenly he trod hard on the brake and swerved across the road. A shower of gravel and loose stones clattered on the underside of the fenders and the car stopped dead at an acute angle across the cycle track.

A few yards ahead of them a peasant's cart drew across the road and went into the field opposite. The peasant did not even look round but went on smoking his pipe, and the ox that was drawing the cart went on in peaceful and patient indifference.

Johann Kaspar laughed. "Serves us right," he said.

He tried to reverse back to the main road, but the car would not move. Nor would it move when he tried to go forward. The brake-lever had jammed.

They got out. Bäuerle crawled underneath the chassis.

"Nothing doing," he said. "We're stuck."

They sat down on the grass edge with the La Salle in front of them. They were three miles from Siebenwasser.

"All this comes from being too stuck up," murmured Bäuerle. "Coming home with a thing like as if I were somebody of importance. Serves me right. Never mind!"

He lay down in the grass. Not a cloud was in the sky. Through his half-closed eyes he saw a girl beside him. Hair as dark as black agate surmounted her brow of spun silk.

Hanns had left his seat and continued on his way towards the west. His heart was not at ease. The cold strength that had filled his being immediately following his deed and had borne him up on his way home to his mother's house had faded into a crippling unsureness of himself. True, he had not modified his ideas in any way. The Leader's great example, the Movement's sacred goal, the steadfast hope of converting the people were his ideal still, as immutable as the stars above. But things were not as they had been. A strange something—a vacuum, an atmospheric disturbance—had come between him and the clear blue sky of his beliefs. The gods he served were still visible, but between him and them an act had intervened. A change had come over the world. It was a more serious, a darker place now.

Hanns was no coward. At Gerhard Träger's he had learned to pour scorn on all forms of sentimentality and gush. He knew that in this world only the strong survived, and that the weak deserved no sympathy. That was what united them—the right that derived from might, the rejection of all clemency, the hope of a future State of virile unity.

Oh, yes, he knew his *Zoroaster,* and he knew that even the thing doomed to fall must yet be given the decisive push. But previous to this day all this had been no more than theoretical knowledge in his mind, ideas about which he could talk. But now he had acted, passed over from the world of ideas to the world of deeds. And his heart misgave him.

Tomorrow I'd do the same again, Hanns said to himself, swishing his stick through the grass. But he said so more out of defiance of the fear he felt than from conviction.

He walked quickly, but no matter how quickly he walked Holzapfel walked beside him, Holzapfel without his spectacles, shortsightedly groping his way between the trees. Holzapfel said nothing, but only looked at Hanns. And when Hanns ran he ran too.

Irene was sitting in the meadow. Next to her her father had dropped off to sleep, with his face in the sun.

No noise disturbed the air. Only the wind stirred in the grass. Irene smiled as she looked at the sleeping man lying there like an overgrown boy dozing in the sun, with the stranded motor-car behind him and only a hill separating him from his native town.

How well he looked. The wrinkles of his clean-shaven face expressed energy, not old age. His skin was tanned and he had a fine head of blond hair. How regularly he breathed. And his mouth was young, and joy and surprise were still ready on his lips, and a dream could still hover on his face like a butterfly. No trace there of the white flaccidity of aging men that Irene found so detestable; no trace of the grey round the eyes, the sunken cheeks, the soft, flabby hands. No, this man asleep before her was her father, and she felt no shame in the thought that her mother had once been his.

Irene looked at the meadows. The grass was in its second crop. A thin swarm of insects hovered over the few sparse flowers. She looked at the hill beyond which Siebenwasser lay. Beyond those trees a new life awaited her.

A smile appeared on her face. Father was dreaming. He was laughing with his eyes shut. A twitching passed over the muscles of his face. He looked as if he had great difficulty in keeping quiet. He clenched his fists in the grass and his nose wrinkled drolly. He raised his shoulders from the ground, his legs began to move, he lifted his knees and went red in the face.

And all of a sudden the old man let forth a wild, uncontrollable burst of laughter. He rolled over on his side, gesticulated with his arms, kicked out with his legs. Then, with laughter still on his face, he turned to Irene and said:

"I've just been dreaming I saw Dr. Baker pulling one of his long

faces and saying Siebenwasser no longer existed, but had sunk to the bottom of the sea, like Atlantis."

He jumped to his feet and dashed over to the motor-car.

"Let's leave the old bus here and walk," he said.

Irene pointed to the luggage at the back of the car.

"But we can't wait here till the car grows wings," said Bäuerle, laughing.

Irene looked round her. The road was empty. Not a house was in sight.

"You had better go on ahead," said Irene, looking at her father.

Bäuerle tested the brake once more. He started the engine and stepped hard on the accelerator. The car refused to move.

"Do go," Irene said. "Send someone back as quick as you can from the nearest garage. I'll wait here with the car."

She made herself comfortable in the back seat. Bäuerle got out.

"You'll have to wait an hour."

Irene took up a book. Johann Kaspar nodded and went off. After a few steps he turned and shouted:

"I'll take the short cut. There's a path over the hill. I remember it."

He started whistling and stepped out briskly towards the short cut.

Irene went on looking at her father's receding figure for a long time. She saw him stop at a hedge and cut himself a stick and use it to hit the apple-trees and make the apples drop to the ground. Then she saw him bend down and fill his pockets and vanish into the woods on the hilltop.

She sat in the car, smiling, and waited.

Hanns saw the car lying at an angle off the roadway, and his first thought was that there had been an accident. He approached and saw Irene. She was sitting at the back, reading.

Looks like a breakdown, Hanns said to himself. He went up to the car. Irene raised her head. The two looked at each other.

"Has anything happened?" asked Hanns.

"The brake," was Irene's answer.

"Can I help?" Hanns asked.

"If you think you can."

Irene got out of the car. Her light silk dust-coat fitted her figure well.

"Have you been waiting long?"

"My father is on his way to Siebenwasser to fetch someone."

"Allow me."

Hanns crept under the car, then crept out again. Without a word he lifted the driver's seat, rummaged round among the tools, then disappeared once more under the chassis.

Irene heard him working away. She stood next to the engine in silence.

Who can he be? she said to herself.

"No wonder!" Hanns called out. "The hand-brake's binding."

He went on working, and eventually reappeared.

"Try it now," he said.

Irene got obediently into the car, started up, engaged gear and the car moved.

"Be careful," she heard him call out. "The foot-brake's worn out."

Slowly she reversed and got the car back to the road. Then she got out.

He stood in front of her, smiling, with a spanner and a screw-driver in his hand. There was an oil stain on his sleeve. Irene said "Thank you," and shook hands with him.

He said she had better not drive with the hand-brake alone. There were a lot of sharp corners between there and Siebenwasser, and a great deal of traffic down below in the town.

"I'll wait," said Irene. Hanns put the tools back in the box and replaced the driving seat.

Did he come from Siebenwasser? Irene asked. Yes, he did. And she? She came from Baltimore, but she was going to stay in Siebenwasser. What was she going to do there? Live, said Irene.

Then she looked at Hanns and her impression was that he was extremely surprised. Irene watched him as he pulled up some grass and wiped the oil from his hands. She saw he wanted to

go, and thought of a dodge to keep him. She produced a picture paper which was lying on the rear seat. Could he spare a little more time?

"A little," Hanns grumbled. He sat down on the running-board next to Irene. Hurriedly she ran her eye over the cross-word puzzle.

"I've been trying to find the name of a Greek philosopher for two days, and I can't manage it," she said.

She laid the newspaper on to her knees.

"Heraclitus, perhaps?" Hanns suggested. Irene counted the letters.

"No, it isn't."

"Or Archimedes?"

"No," she said, pleased that he went on guessing.

He looked more closely over her shoulder, and she could see his face without looking at him. Now she knew why she was trembling. The youth sitting next to her was the scholar-shepherd sleeping under the fairy-tree, the youth among the intertwining boughs beside the spring. He had stepped out of the picture and was sitting by her side.

"It must be a name with an O in it," she said.

"Solon?" suggested Hanns.

"No," said Irene, secretly delighted.

"Something with an O in it," Hanns murmured. "Something with an O in it. Greek philosopher spelled with an O."

He took the paper and examined the clues. Irene gave him a pencil. They sat side by side like two children. Cyclists and lorries passed by. The shadows of the trees grew longer. They gazed silently at the paper, united by a stupid game.

"I've got it," examined Hanns suddenly.

He hastily crossed out two syllables. Irene took the paper from him.

"Plato," she read.

She looked up, laughing. But her laughter stopped short.

"What's the matter?" she cried in alarm.

"Nothing, nothing," Hanns stammered out. He had gone deathly pale.

Johann Kaspar found the short cut through the woods. It was a stiff climb, and Johann Kaspar still remembered quite distinctly that it took ten minutes to get to the top. But you saved at least a quarter of an hour, because the road down below followed the windings of the river.

The path was known as Jacob's Ladder. In the old days they used to have bets as to who got to the top first. Right at the top were eighty steps, consisting of small tree-trunks, and they really did seem to end in the clouds. Johann Kaspar tackled the ascent. He breathed in deeply and breathed out slowly. His heart was sound. No surplus flesh hindered his limbs. Friend Baker ought to try this, he said to himself with a smile. He did not stop till he got to the sixtieth step. Then he looked back. The car looked minute back on the road, and the river beside it and the houses of Erlenbach looked like toys.

Johann Kaspar went on climbing. He felt utterly at peace. In front of him, over the hilltop, was a cloud the colour of lamb's fleece.

That morning mine host of the Blue Bear Inn had received a telegram which caused him to rack his brains for a long time.

SIX MEDIUM SIZED TROUT STOP TWO BOTTLES SIEBENWASSER HERDENWEG STOP SPATZLE AS USUAL STOP SWEETS SUET DUMPLINGS WITH WINE SAUCE STOP ARRIVE TWO O'CLOCK STOP BÄUERLE BALTIMORE.

Crazy, Henri Jockel said to himself. But he did not let the telegram out of his hands. It had been sent from Mainz. Twice he went down to the stream which flowed through his garden, lifted the cover of the tank and counted the medium-sized trout in it. Then he banged the cover angrily back in its place. The telegram was nothing but a hoax, perpetrated by some boozer on holiday. Henri Jockel went and read the telegram to his wife and asked her advice. For nearly thirty years Minchen had been in the habit of reading her husband's moods by the way the veins

stood out on his forehead. And on this occasion she consulted this natural barometer before expressing an opinion. Then, in her Hanseatic dialect, she said:

"It looks to me as if there's something fishy about it!"

"I think so too!" shouted Henri Jockel, slamming the door. Women's wisdom's thrice as sure, he added to himself.

He stepped into the office, helped himself to two cherry brandies, took down the directory and looked up the Bäuerles. There were columns and columns of them. They looked almost as numerous as the sands of the sea. In Siebenwasser, Bäuerles were as cheap as blackberries. They were, so to speak, the backbone of the population. Henri Jockel flung the directory into the corner. "Six medium sized trout—two bottles of Herdenweg—suet dumplings—Bäuerle—Baltimore." He wasn't going to be taken in by a yarn like that. He'd got his head screwed on, he had.

He poured himself out another cherry brandy, and then another, but he couldn't get that telegram out of his head.

There was a knock at the door. It was the cook. Timidly she asked what was to be the day's menu.

"Vienna steak with potato salad," growled Henri Jockel, and went out into the garden once more to inspect his trout tank.

Johann Kaspar did not spend more than a few minutes at the top of the hill. Siebenwasser lay before his eyes. There were the towers of St. Andrew's Church, there was the bastion, and there was the slate-grey of the Old Town. Whole new districts had sprung up down in the valley along the hillside. It's grown big, Johann Kaspar said to himself. He felt no surprise, no overwhelming pleasure. He had been looking forward to this moment too long for that. He took it as a matter of course now. He was hungry. Moreover, he was in luck. There was a garage right at the bottom of the hill. He spoke to the attendant and explained just where the car had broken down. "Tow her to the Blue Bear," he called out as the towing car drove off.

Then he took the path through the gardens. The black and red flag fluttered from the bastion and the streets through which he

passed were decorated. When he reached the town hall he read on a shield: JUBILEE OF THE ODENWALD SOCIETY—HONOUR YOUR NATIVE LAND.

Johann Kaspar nodded his head.

Henri Jockel had gone and opened his fish tank and slammed it to again at least ten times. That telegram gave him no peace. He walked across the grass, deliberately treading it down. He would have liked to have trodden down the cucumber beds too, but at that moment Minchen appeared. Of course, Minchen always had to turn up just when he was in a mighty rage. There she was, actually running towards him. "Henn-ree!" she called out. It was perfectly disgusting. After thirty years she couldn't properly pronounce his Christian name.

"What's up with you this time?" he growled angrily when she reached him.

"Oh!" panted poor Minchen. "There's a man in the dining-room, and he says he didn't come all the way from Baltimore to eat your Vienna steak!"

"What?" exclaimed Henri, seizing Minchen by the shoulder. "Where is he?"

But before she could answer he had dashed into the office, and was staring through the crack he used for keeping an eye on his waiters.

A clean-shaven, sunburned man was sitting at one of the tables, smoking a pipe.

"That's the fellow all right," exclaimed Henri Jockel. Then he called down to the kitchen.

"Put the wine to cool down there! Hi! put the wine to cool at once. Why hasn't it been cooled yet?"

Then he rushed out into the garden, flung open the fish tank and took the net.

"Give me the knife, Minchen, quickly!" And Minchen came running up with the knife, and he stabbed the writhing fishes, one, two, three, four, five, six, while Minchen held her hands to her ears, although they died in silence, the medium-sized trout.

CHAPTER VIII

KILIAN KERN swore more that day than any time this twelvemonth. There were fifteen parcels, fifteen big boxes tied up with string, all addressed to Lieutenant Träger, who lived a quarter of an hour outside the village, and quite a long way up the hill besides. That meant four journeys to the lieutenant's cottage with his little delivery truck. Kilian Kern stamped the parcels and flung them into the yellow truck. The parcels came from a Munich textile factory.

Kilian Kern sat down. This was significant. This was as plain as a pikestaff. Kilian Kern was a disabled ex-service man with an artificial leg for which he had to thank Verdun, to say nothing of the effects of shell-shock which came back whenever he drank so much as three glasses of wine. Kilian Kern was postmaster of the village of Erlenbach and an employee of the Republic; and on the strength of these properly directed and stamped forms he was bound to deliver to this lieutenant fifteen parcels, the contents of which he knew for certain boded no good for the State.

By our Holy Mother of the trenches, I've got to find out what's inside those cardboard boxes.

Kilian Kern hung around those boxes for a long time. Should he cut the string and have a look inside? That would earn him the sack. Should he untie them and pry inside? What a horrible, sneaking thing to do. Load them up then.

And he loaded the parcels into his little truck, and pushed it down the village street. The cattle were coming home from the meadows. The sun was setting. The curses of the peasants in the fields had died away.

Kilian Kern was forty years old. His father, an Erlenbach farm-labourer, had had five children, of whom he was the eldest. Two of his brothers had fallen in the war, and he had lost a leg at Verdun. His sisters were married, Marie to a Heidelberg store-keeper who swore by Hitler and spent Sundays speaking for him in the villages, and Annie to a widowed old pensioner in Bochum, whose bed she had had to warm even when she was only his house-keeper. He, Kilian Kern, had hobbled back to his village, where his father still dragged on in the draughty old cottage, his limbs bent by gout and years of toil; and besides a deal bed, a cupboard, a table, two chairs, a goat and five hundred weights of potatoes nothing was left. Mother lay in the churchyard three paces from the copper-beech tree, and if Annie in Bochum hadn't regularly sent one mark a month to the cemetery attendant the grass would long since have grown over her grave and nobody would have been able to tell where his mother lay. Father was in his second child-hood and spent the time blubbering. At night he would creep out into the fields behind the cottage and start digging for treasure from the Thirty Years' War.

For three months Kilian Kern had been a member of a soldiers' council. He believed in the Revolution and in the rights of poor people. He remained as poor as a church mouse, though many others enriched themselves by profiteering in military stores and signing premature demobilization papers. The non-commissioned officer Kern limped straight from a field hospital to freedom. He listened to speeches at meetings, and every morning when he woke up he hoped that that day would be the promised day of reckoning with the generals and the industrialists. The great German Revo-lution lived in him like a vivid dream. The Frankish peasant's furious hatred of the landlords and the princes still lingered in his blood. But after three months Kilian went back to his village. He no longer believed in the Revolution. The people were too cowardly.

The State gave Kilian an artificial leg and a small pension. He lived in his father's cottage for eight months, and then managed to get a job as postmaster. He moved from the cottage and estab-

lished himself in the town hall, where a room with a kitchen was allotted him. A year later he got married.

None of the girls had wanted the disabled ex-service man, who was poor into the bargain. But the other side of the hill, in Hofen, there was old Lämmle's daughter, who was a wallflower at all the dances and always sat alone at church. None of the young fellows ever looked at her, and the women avoided her too, and the old peasant her father abused her all day long, as if she were a sick cow. Regina had a child, a boy of three, whose father was a French prisoner of war who had long since returned to his wife in Provence. He had written to her once, and sent her a parcel with wine and chocolate and dates, but Regina had been deprived of it by the customs authorities. Since then Regina had lived in her father's yard, tolerated and grumbled at, sneered at and derided.

Kilian met Regina for the first time at the Wild Ass Inn up in the wood. She had been delivering some cheese, and was sitting on the seat outside the kitchen door, waiting for the money. She sat with downcast eyes, holding her child's hand. The child had been pelted through the village with stones only three days before. Little French bastard, they had called after it, and if the vicar hadn't intervened it would surely have been driven into the duck-pond.

Kilian talked to Regina at great length that evening, and hobbled quite a long way back through the wood with her. It was the first time a man had ever spoken to her as if she were a human being. And how he spoke too! His deep voice seemed to envelop her, and she had no other thought but that he must stay and go on walking by her side. Kilian talked of the war, of the leg he lost at Verdun, of the officers who slunk off in 1918, of the sergeant-major's grousing and the paymaster's sharp practices. And he laughed, and said the people were fools, particularly the peasants. They had forgotten everything, and once more attended regimental reunions and once more marched past the generals as if nothing had happened at all. But he had not forgotten. So far as he was concerned the gilt was off the gingerbread for good.

They parted in silence. Next Sunday Kilian went to see old Lämmle. Old Lämmle didn't need much talking over. The old man was delighted that someone had turned up who was willing to marry the girl and remove his household shame. He even permitted Kilian to stay the night, to make sure he wasn't buying a pig in a poke. Never in his life had Kilian experienced so much love as he did that night. Next morning, before he hobbled away to Erlenbach to get punctually to work, he told old Lämmle over a quick parting drink that he preferred a woman like that to ten virtuous ones; and his mother had always said that the worst fruits were not those the wasps had nibbled at. The old peasant nodded his head and walked with Kilian as far as the signpost. And as they parted he said:

"I know she's a strapping wench, and I'd have put up with the bastard, but what I can't swallow is that it was a Frenchman."

At that Kilian laughed and hobbled away. The old stick-in-the-mud, he said to himself. Takes it into his head that it's a disgrace when it's nothing but a woman with her natural joy and instinct.

They got married that summer, and Regina settled down in the post office and brought her child with her. Kilian gave the child his name, and if anyone dared open his mouth in the village inn and say so much as a word about his wife the postmaster would raise his stick.

Kilian Kern reached the end of the village. He stopped and wiped the sweat from his brow. Ever since he had been in charge of the post office in this village he had taken no interest in politics. Politics seemed to him to be nothing but a lot of hopeless chatter. Politics was a business of which he understood nothing at all. He never voted in any of the elections and never attended political meetings. Let them talk as much as they liked, they would never alter anything. The people were fools, and the peasants were once more running obediently after the leaders whom they had abandoned in masses in 1918.

When he came home after making his evening round and unbuckled his artificial leg and sat down to his boiled potatoes and cream cheese and crept into bed beside Regina because they had

to be economical with the light as a child was on the way, the word Fatherland would often occupy his thoughts; and he would say to Regina that more humbug centred round that one word than any other. For its sake he had lain in the filth for four long years and lost a leg besides. Why did people make such a fuss about a thing that cost them so much? And what did you get in return? Cream cheese and potatoes, and a bit of meat on Sundays if you were lucky.

When her husband spoke like that Regina would creep closer to him and put her hand over his mouth. Those were wicked thoughts that welled up in his heart at those moments, she thought, and quite unsuitable for a postmaster. They might cost him his job. She lay next to him, pregnant, in the darkness of the heavy-curtained room, and within her body beat the heart of his child.

On Sundays they always went into the woods. They would rest in a grassy hollow, and Kilian would fetch out the illustrated atlas he had helped himself to in a château in Champagne. It was a thick book, with coloured plates. All the countries of the world were in it, and many pictures of foreign towns and rivers. Kilian would turn again and again to the picture of Stockholm, with the castle which looked out like a great jewel case over the blue sea with its ships and rafts. And he would turn over a few more pages and see the domes and towers of many churches thrusting upwards into the clear sky, with "Moscow" inscribed in beautiful curved script above. And he would turn over a few more pages, and before his eyes rose tower upon tower, and the towers were houses, and there gleamed the ocean and many huge ships were lying at the quayside, and that was New York.

They would sit in their grassy hollow, and behind them the beeches grew in orderly rows, and the kites circled silently over the forest, and the cardamine blossomed, and everything was near and familiar.

And Kilian would hold the atlas in his hand.

"Why are people poor?" he would ask, and point to Stockholm and Moscow and New York. "Why can't I go to all these places

and see for myself how people are getting on? Why have we got to die knowing hardly anything but Erlenbach?"

Regina tried hard to distract her husband from that atlas. But he cherished it more than the Bible. Often in his dreams at night he would apostrophize the people of New York.

Such was the life of Kilian Kern, the postmaster. He had given his leg to his country. He thought that that was sufficient for one life. He nourished his private dreams of the wider world. But he was poor, and it was far away.

The war entered into all Kilian Kern's thoughts. The war was the alpha and omega of all his simple meditations. His sawn-off leg that lay rotting in some chalk-pit had been replaced by a false one. And when he hobbled through the village streets his leather artificial leg creaked. It was all very well for those with healthy limbs to laugh. But wherever he went and whatever he did the trenches rose before his eyes, and the shrieking lieutenant with his entrails running through his hands. At that time Kilian had sworn an oath. "If I come out of this alive," he had sworn to himself, "I shall travel all over the world, and see what the life of man really is." He had come out of it alive, and gone back to Erlenbach. And he hobbled about Erlenbach, and many comrades from his regiment would have been happy if only they could have done the same. But Kilian was alive, and life was mean, and there was nothing to look forward to or hope for. And he would die without knowing what the world was really like.

It was in the night when the child came. Regina had been groaning and screaming for two hours. Kilian sat in the kitchen, drinking brandy. There they were once more, those shrieks, just like the shrieks in no-man's-land. And you had to sit here and submit to it patiently. The invisible enemy was shooting, and the woman was reeling under his bombardment. And as he sat, gazing into his glass and lost in thought, with Regina screaming in the next room, suddenly he heard a roll of drums and the sound of singing and men marching in step outside in the street. He sprang to his feet and dashed over to the window and, in the light of the moon, standing in the village square, he saw forty men in uniform, drawn

up smartly as if on parade; and he heard the order "Stand at ease!" and he heard the voice of the officer in command.

"Just listen to this, please," he heard the officer say. "There will be a route march next Saturday morning. Fall in at six o'clock sharp. And I don't want to hear any bad excuses. No use trying to get out of it. Heil Hitler! Dismiss!"

A fearful cry came from the next room as if in answer. Kilian leapt away from the window and burst open the door of the room where Regina lay. The midwife was holding in her arms a new human being just come into the world.

He dashed over to the bed. The midwife stood trembling in front of his wife. Kilian was out in the streets in a series of noisy leaps. He ran as he did when the English broke through at Cambrai and fetched Dr. Fritz from the village inn. And while the old man with the gold-rimmed spectacles busied himself with the unconscious woman, Kilian heard through the open window a song echoing through the night from the distant woods:

Victorious shall we beat the French.

Kilian Kern never forgot that night. He spent a long time with Dr. Fritz in the kitchen, talking about the awfulness of life. They drank a litre of cherry brandy and argued in whispers. The old country doctor drew another bottle from his pocket and offered Kilian a drink, and then he wanted to go. But Kilian detained him. Why is life so mean? he asked. Why did people always forget everything? Dr. Fritz laughed, and said you either had to get used to it or hang yourself. You learnt it in the end. But Kilian got up and fetched the child lying in its crib in the kitchen, where the pink little human being was sleeping its first sleep in the world. "Do you think it heard all that singing just now?" he asked the doctor. "Of course it did," the doctor said. "And do you think singing like that will get men anywhere?" he asked. "No," answered the doctor. "Each generation has to learn everything all over again from the beginning." Then Kilian put the crib back again in the kitchen, unbuckled his artificial leg and put it down on the table.

"Once, many years ago now, we were in the trenches at Bapaume,

and it was Christmas," he said. "And the lieutenant in my section started spitting blood. Blood came foaming from his mouth, doctor. The night was as peaceful as my hand here, and the men were singing in all the dug-outs, and not a shot came from the French lines. Two comrades and I carried the lieutenant to the rear on a stretcher. We were able to walk upright, though it was bright moonlight. And from every hole and dug-out there came the sound of singing, as though the rats were on holiday, and when we got to the first dressing station and saw the first Christmas tree we carried the lieutenant inside. And that reddish foam was still coming from his mouth. We put him down, and a doctor came and beckoned to us, and we took the lieutenant into a room, it was the doctor's room, and we put the lieutenant to bed. Downstairs someone was playing the piano. He was playing one of those peace-time songs. And suddenly the lieutenant sat up in bed and took my hand and whispered: 'Listen; if you ever go home, tell them that after this everything must be different.' And then he died. He just turned round and went white in the face and that was all."

Kern helped himself to a drink and Dr. Fritz drank too, and then Kern said:

"But things didn't get different."

The midwife came quietly from the room. She went over to the hearth and started making some coffee.

From that day on there was one man in the village whom Kilian Kern hated. His name was Gerhard Träger, and he lived on the hill. On Saturdays young peasants went to him, and young fellows from Siebenwasser too, and the rat-tat-tat of drums was heard, and then there was marching and counter-marching in the meadows, and later they would all gather at the village inn and raise a din and sing their songs. What did Kilian Kern care about the Marxists? What were the Marxists anyway? He didn't see why the Marxists were necessarily such pigs. And as for the French, he knew them, having fought against them for four years. That was not a thing to laugh at. But those young fellows laughed at the French. Just like behind the lines.

They lost the war and talk as big as ever, Kilian Kern said

to himself, and avoided the inn. When it got dark he lay down by Regina's side. The child lay next to them in the clothes basket. Kilian's artificial leg lay on a chair beside the bed. Sometimes Kilian would call out in his dreams. "Take cover!" he would call out. "Take cover!" and with gentle arms Regina would soothe her husband and restore him to peaceful sleep.

Gerhard Träger listened to Hanns Diefenbach's report. The two sat in the single room in Träger's peasant cottage. A number of maps were laid out on the table, showing the shrinkage of German territory due to the Treaty of Versailles. Areas beyond the German frontiers in which German minorities lived were coloured red. Gerhard Träger proposed giving his first lesson on national policy that evening before the night exercises. It was necessary to give the lads who had gathered round him during the last six months an insight into the task ahead. That task, for Gerhard Träger and all those who thought like him, meant the union of all Germans into one great united realm.

Hanns told his story without any embroidery. He described briefly exactly what had happened in school that day. He concealed nothing, not even his fears and scruples.

The thirty-year-old officer regarded the youth before him. He liked the earnest openness with which he talked. His struggle for clarity, his readiness to sacrifice himself for the Leader, without demand for praise or recompense—this was the stuff of which the vanguard of the revolution must be made. With a hundred thousand blind believers like this, it would not be difficult to overthrow the State. This lad was made of different stuff from the petty bourgeois who joined the Movement because they were in arrears with their taxes, because they wanted revenge, and used Hitler as an excuse for evading bankruptcy and not paying their dues. It often seemed to Gerhard Träger that the whole dream of German revival was based on nothing but the lust for vengeance nourished by an impoverished middle class.

But this young man spoke with a different spirit. His was the unconscious voice of the combatants of Langemark, the shades

of the Baltic and Upper Silesia. Soldierly spirit, renunciation of every bourgeois advantage, yearning for the growth of the Realm were all combined in this young man. Here was someone who renounced everything—his school, his career, his peace and his comfort—so that the Movement might live.

Gerhard Träger rose to his feet. He went over to Hanns and sat on the table immediately in front of him. He went on gazing at him for a long time. The eyes were the same as those of 1914 in Flanders, before the assault on the English lines. Those eyes, too, were in love with death. The flame burned on. Defeat had not extinguished it.

"This is a difficult hour for you," said Gerhard Träger. "Do you know what you are giving up?"

Hanns nodded. He looked at the officer steadfastly.

"You know what a struggle lies ahead of you, Hanns. There will be no peace for you, nothing but struggle."

"I belong to the Leader," Hanns answered.

They spoke no more. The lad's hand lay motionless in that of the officer.

Kilian Kern had pushed his truck quite a long way up from the village. At the first milestone he took a path that led through the fields. The sun was blazing fiercely and dark clouds were coming across over the woods. Kilian was boiling with rage. He hated the parcels in front of him in the truck. It was hardly ten years since the war ended, and here the old military orders were being barked across the fields again. There was no more peace in the village. The young peasants practised small-arms shooting. Another few years like this and the whole thing would be forgotten. The prayers in the Flanders mud would be in vain, in vain the women's shrieks to heaven. Once more the young were intoxicating themselves with the name of the Fatherland, and the whole village had gone mad. The other day there had been a meeting, and the peasants had gone to the drill hall, two hundred men and women. The man they listened to came from Siebenwasser, he was a senior post office official. According to him the

Marxists were to blame for all the poverty and all the trouble in the village; and not only the Marxists but the Jews. And then had come a sentence that Kilian Kern had noted particularly. "Let us strike down the enemy at home," the man had said, "and then we shall be strong. Chase the Jews and the Socialist bosses out of the country, and we shall be unconquerable. Then no-one will be able to deny us the rights that we as a dominant race demand and shall attain."

Oh-ho, Kilian Kern had said to himself. So that's the way the wind is blowing. First turn out the Jews and the Marxists, and then go for the rest of the world.

His artificial leg creaked. They would never put that sort of humbug over on him. Even if he had a hundred sound and healthy legs he wouldn't march again. He wanted to live. He didn't want to be a hero.

When he was about a hundred yards from Gerhard Träger's house his truck toppled over in a rut. The parcels upset all over the reddish earth. Kilian Kern stopped in his tracks and swore. There lay the parcels, all four of them, and one of them had come open. Before his eyes there lay a brown shirt, a shoulder-strap, a sword-belt, some black breeches and a pair of strong top-boots.

Kilian stared at all this get-up with a grin. So this was the uniform the peasant lads had been chattering about for days in the village inn. Money could be got for that. But there was none to be found for a shot-off leg or a mutilated face. His eyes grew blood-shot and he picked up a stone and flung it at the shirt, and spat upon the boots.

"Bloody performing monkeys!" he roared. And then the rain came down and there was a sharp flash of lightning the other side of the wood.

Schickedanz was in Mother Döring's Inn. He was all alone in the bar. He had come at eleven o'clock and now it was four. Through the leaded windowpanes he could see the river. A fully-laden coal barge lay in the artificial inlet that was called the harbour. Light, gentle rain had been falling for an hour. Clouds

concealed the hilltops. Schickedanz stared at the water. His seventh glass of wine was in front of him. He was waiting for Kalahne.

Kalahne had said he was coming at five o'clock, when they were to draft the explanation the owner of the newspaper required.

Curse that play! Schickedanz said to himself. A nice mess it had landed him in. It had cost him everything. As soon as he had got to the office the day after the disturbance he had been told to go and see Herr Breitwieser. The old man was in a state he had never seen him in before. This owner of many newspapers, for whom the editorial columns had never been anything but a kind of adjunct to the advertisements, suddenly assumed the guise of a man having the most earnest convictions. A shower of phrases like freedom of the spirit, the temple of the arts, poetic license, and so on and so forth and other similar facetious pre-war expressions had hailed about Schickedanz's ears. The devil alone knew where he had got them all from. In brief, his notice of the play was responsible for the disturbance, and he was given the sack for descending to the level of the street-corner orator.

My notice of the play, Schickedanz said to himself, and went silently back to his room, fetched his soap and towel from the cupboard and walked out of the building without making any fuss whatever. At Mother Döring's he met the head of the publishing department, who told him that nearly three hundred subscribers had cancelled their orders, whereupon it became clear to Schickedanz what Herr Breitwieser had at the back of his mind when he talked about the freedom of the spirit. He drank himself half-seas over and went to see Kalahne. But Kalahne turned him out and told him to come back next day when he was sober.

Schickedanz went away, grumbling. He stayed at Mother Döring's till three o'clock in the morning, and then went to see Maria, but she was engaged.

That night he was seized with a tremendous hatred for Kalahne. The ambitious devil had made him his whipping-boy, and now here he was on the streets and he could send no more money to

his mother. If only it had been a real political act, a straightforward blow at this tedious Weimar State, it would not have been so bad. But he had only been caught up in an intrigue the aim of which he did not know. Worse than that, he had made a fool of himself and got himself called a reactionary and a canting obscurantist. Next evening, on the way to Kalahne's his mind had been firmly made up. He would break with the man once and for all and reveal the whole story in next day's *People's Rights.* But before he had time to open his mouth Kalahne laid before his eyes a copy of a joint letter that the editorial staffs of all the newspapers appearing in Siebenwasser had written that day to the proprietor of the *Siebenwasser and District Gazette.* The letter stated that, while its authors dissociated themselves entirely from the views expressed in Schickedanz's dramatic criticism, they felt bound to point out that it was contrary to the spirit and the letter of the German Constitution to penalize a man because of his opinions. They lived in a constitutional State, which guaranteed the right of freedom of criticism to everybody, and the Journalists' Association of Siebenwasser placed themselves unreservedly behind their colleague. They considered that a matter of principle was at stake, although, as stated, they dissociated themselves from the views expressed in the article in question. This was a matter in which the very foundation stone of democracy, namely the right to free expression of opinion, was at stake, and that right was inviolable. They demanded a withdrawal of Schickedanz's dismissal, otherwise they would report the matter to their headquarters in Berlin and to the Ministry at Stuttgart. The letter was signed by every member of all the editorial staffs, including that of the *People's Rights.*

Schickedanz read the document.

"Have they gone mad?" he asked Kalahne, tapping his brow significantly.

A grin was the only answer.

"You mean to tell me that in the name of the democracy we are fighting and which you ridiculed in your—I beg your pardon, I mean in my article—in the name of this Jewish freedom of speech

which has turned Germany into a pigsty, in the name of the Constitution that we—but these fellows are absolutely crazy. This is what I call making incendiaries of the fire-brigade. This isn't fighting a thing, this is purely and simply—"

"Legal," interrupted Kalahne, grinning once more as he saw Schickedanz's dumbfounded expression. He told him it was time to put all that romantic rubbish about riots and barricades and so forth out of his head once and for all. Tactics had altered. Democracy was to be overthrown by democratic means. Schickedanz went on staring at him, blankly and uncomprehendingly, and Kalahne let fall a phrase which haunted him for days afterwards and turned the wine bitter in his mouth.

"It seems to me," said Kalahne, "that your contempt for humanity is not yet sufficiently developed to allow you to take in all these ideas."

Schickedanz looked out on to the river. The rain fell in a thin drizzle, drifting through the trees and past the windows, pattering gently on the roofs. The smoke from the chimneys rose in tortuous spirals. Schickedanz drank. A soft blanket of intoxication encompassed him. The coal barge seemed a stranded whale and the little harbour and the houses yonder a town somewhere in Norway.

Shortly before five o'clock Kalahne was rung up at his home by Councillor Schrader. He was to go to the office at once. It was urgent. Kalahne went. He was most annoyed. This summons upset all his Saturday afternoon arrangements. Schickedanz was waiting for him at Mother Döring's. The letter Schickedanz's boss demanded to settle the matter once and for all—it insisted on Schickedanz's explicitly renouncing terroristic street-corner methods and undertaking to denounce them in the future—had to be written this very evening, before any new complications arose. How cheap democracy was. It was essential that Schickedanz's paper take him back. Premature martyrs were unnecessary. It was far more important to honeycomb the bourgeois State with loyal people. All this talk about barricades and revolution—pah!

His paper on *The Straight Path to Power,* sent to Munich a few days before, contained the following phrases:

> The strategy of our Revolution must not follow the pathetic precedents of the nineteenth century. See Delacroix's naïve picture of the barricades. We must be indefatigable in honeycombing the State, working at it like ants, undermining it, antagonizing people from it, and so gradually depriving it of its life-blood. For this purpose we need the methods of democracy, not those of the armed rising. One day the whole people will have been alienated from the State, and that will be the Revolution.

Kalahne walked through the gardens to the town hall. The rain moistened his brow.

Councillor Schrader sat in his office, poring over the city budget he would have to lay before the council in a few weeks' time. He was in a difficult situation. He needed a safe majority to be sure of passing the budget. Hitherto the Social-Democrats and the Centre had closely co-operated, and this had enabled all official resolutions to be got through. But a few weeks ago that unfortunate play had been produced at the municipal theatre, and since then the devil had been loose in Siebenwasser. As luck would have it the young fellows had caused a sensation which had repercussions far wider than the play itself and quickly developed into an attack on the established order. Fortunately they had been spared the worst consequences by the fact that the Centre Party, which had promptly seized on the play as a *casus belli,* had been restrained from making public representations and had contented themselves with protesting behind the scenes. Thus an open conflict between the parties had been avoided, though the Social-Democrats went on insisting on their intellectual freedom, while the Centre threatened to retire from the coalition if a stop were not put once and for all to such theatrical contretemps. The negotiations had been heated, and this most regrettable affair seemed to be leading to a first-class crisis. Councillor Schrader spent four

days trying to persuade the Social-Democrats that it was up to them to make some concession to the Centre in return for their having refrained from making a public protest. On the fifth day he had his way. The Centre were given a seat on the education committee as the price of their goodwill. Intellectual freedom and the coalition were saved alike. The budget was out of danger.

The negotiations had been highly confidential. Apart from the Party leaders only he and Dr. Kalahne had taken part in them, and they had parted satisfied, for reason had triumphed.

Three days later hundreds of copies of a leaflet entitled *Party Haggling in Siebenwasser* were distributed throughout the town. The leaflet was violent in tone but not inaccurate in content. It described the negotiations connected with the seat on the education committee in full, and was signed by Dern, the post office official who called himself Regional Leader of the National-Socialist Workers' Party. The violent tone in which the document was written made it possible to issue a formal denial, more particularly as Dern was very unpopular because of his domineering manner towards the townspeople. Who could have given Dern his information? Councillor Schrader had spent a whole night turning all the possibilities over in his mind, but without result. Everyone who had taken part in the discussion had been sworn to secrecy. Could it have been Dr. Kalahne? But when one knew the contempt that highly conscientious person had for Dern the thought was absurd. Had he not recently described Dern in Frau von Berg's drawing-room as the Wotan of Siebenwasser? Did he not visit Herr Aschaffenburg, who was a Jew? Certainly he was said also to frequent the house of Lieutenant Träger, but he made no attempt to conceal the fact. This Träger was a *détraqué* and a crank, but there was no denying the literary significance which the great Liberal Press attributed to his war book. Nobody could blame Kalahne for making contacts with political opponents in the realm of the arts. After all they were living under a democracy and not under a tsar.

Schrader sighed. His suspicions were forced down a painful

channel. There must be spies and eavesdroppers among his staff. He had noticed two departmental secretaries reading the *Swabian Eagle* during the eleven o'clock interval a few weeks ago, and he had promptly looked away. What had the private reading of his staff got to do with him? But since the distribution of that leaflet he had felt unsafe. The ground seemed undermined beneath his feet. He pushed all his papers away. What an atmosphere to live in. Officials as spies and eavesdroppers! That meant the collapse of all order.

Councillor Schrader was a gentle soul. Compromise in this world of conflicting forces seemed to him to be the only way. He liked everything to be open and aboveboard, and there was nothing he hated more than having to be on the alert.

He sat quietly at his desk. If only there were some way of cleansing this poisoned atmosphere. How ignoble all this public house gossip was, how loathsome for the free spirit of the city of Siebenwasser this serpent of suspicion and calumny that crept from house to house.

The beadle came in with a visiting card. It had on it:

Henri Jockel,

Landlord and Restaurateur

wishes to see his worship the mayor in a matter of vital importance to the welfare of the community.

Schrader knitted his brow. What was up this time? Henri Jockel, excellent hotel proprietor, famous for his cellar and his cuisine, had one regrettable fault. He was an incorrigible maker of plans. Scarcely a month passed by without his producing a new one. In his youth he had busied himself with the idea of diverting the Neckar to the north and uniting it with the Main. He had called it a gigantic idea, though nobody knew exactly what would be gained by it. "Gigantic" was his every second word. When his first child was born, his wife had a gigantically difficult delivery. If one of his guests ever got a little tipsy, Henri Jockel would describe him as gigantically blotto. When the weather was fine,

he would call it gigantically beautiful and if it poured it was gigantic too. Nothing was sufficiently insignificant not to be called gigantic by Henri Jockel. In Siebenwasser he was always called the giant. Councillor Schrader was still considering the best thing to do and hadn't had time to give the beadle an answer when Jockel burst into the room. He bustled excitedly up to Schrader. Bäuerle had come back, he said, Johann Kaspar Bäuerle, with whom he had gone to school forty-five years ago. Forty-five years ago, he said, Johann Kaspar had been so gigantically poor that he hadn't had three buttons to his trousers and today he had driven up to his hotel in a *Lasalch*, as his wife called the gigantic thing, and he had his daughter with him, and nothing so gigantically lovely as she was ever seen nowadays. And, of course, they had taken a glass of wine and Bäuerle had told him that he was the owner of huge factories in America, but wanted to settle down in Siebenwasser and spend his money in his own country.

Councillor Schrader had the glimmering of an idea. Assuming that Jockel wasn't raving, here was something to fill the newspapers and divert the town's attention. He had been on the lookout for something like this for days.

Kalahne entered the town hall by a side entrance. It was Saturday afternoon. The doors were wide open. He could smell the sweet mustiness of the documents and hear the shuffling footsteps of the charwomen between the well-used chairs of the municipal staff.

He entered Schrader's room. Schrader, contrary to his usual custom, was striding up and down, and there was Henri Jockel, saying:

". . . and he wants to buy an estate with woods and vineyards, and he asked how things were with the museum and the theatre and the almshouse; it's absolutely gigantic, I tell you."

Schrader stopped striding up and down, nodded to Kalahne and said:

"And now let's sit down, and just you tell us the whole story again from the beginning, my dear Jockel, but quite quietly and without any gigantics."

They all sat down. Henri Jockel planted his hands firmly on his knees. He took a deep breath and stared down at the carpet. And then he began:

"Forty-five years ago, when I was a boy . . ."

CHAPTER IX

FIFTEEN parcels lay in the kitchen of Gerhard Träger's cottage. Soft light came in through the narrow window. Two men were standing in the semi-darkness. They were naked from the waist up. The uniforms were spread out on the table and over the hearth. Fifteen shining pairs of boots stood in a row against the wall. The officer looked silently at the boy's fair skin. Hanns picked up the shirts and measured the length of the arms.

He laughed, tested the leather of the sword-belt, stroked the straps.

"Really?" he exclaimed. "Really?"

"Yes, Hanns," he heard the officer say. "Take it. You've earned it."

Hanns sat down on a chair. Rapidly he shed his boots and trousers, tore off his patched old shirt and stood naked in the kitchen. Gerhard Träger went up to him.

The boy laughed, embarrassed. He felt the officer's hand on his shoulder. It was hot and dry.

"What are you frightened of?" he heard the officer say. His voice seemed to be coming from a great distance.

"I'm not frightened."

Johann Kaspar Bäuerle lay in bed in the Blue Bear Inn, in Room No. 1, looking out of the window, blinking. The towers of St. Andrew's Church shimmered grey-blue in the rain. The smoke from the chimneys crept over the roofs. The rain came pattering down.

Johann Kaspar felt refreshed. The slight tipsiness of the night

before had completely vanished. He had slept well. The air that came in through the window had an earthy tang. Bäuerle jumped out of bed and knocked on the wall that separated him from Irene. There was no answer, so he knocked again. But not a sound came. He dressed himself quickly. He found Irene's door locked, so he went down to the vestibule, where Irene was sitting.

She saw her father and stood up. Bäuerle saw a man bowing to him politely.

"This is Dr. Kalahne, father. He's come from the town hall to invite us to the banquet of the Odenwald Society this evening. There's to be dancing afterwards."

Bäuerle looked at Kalahne. He's got a face like a priest, he said to himself.

Kalahne repeated the invitation.

"You treat me as if I were a maharajah," said Bäuerle with a laugh, shaking Kalahne so firmly by the hand that he made him wince.

"What do you say, Irene?"

"Of course we'll go."

Kalahne bowed and went away.

"He doesn't look like a German at all," Irene murmured and dashed upstairs to her room. She stood in front of the mirror and the soft light of the lamp played on her skin. She shut her eyes for a second, and saw the road at Erlenbach, and the car, and the hand he offered her as he walked away, pale and without a word.

Frau von Berg and Bringolf had worked together on the manuscript that the superintendent was to stage in honour of the fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of the Odenwald Society. They had taken three days to recover from their first reading of it. It was a drama in ten tableaux, with speaking parts and music. That is what the principal, Allwohn, the valiant rambler who had been on the committee for years, had called it. Five golden shields adorned his walking stick.

He was seventy years old and was one of the founder-members

of the society. There was no hilltop he had not climbed, no path he had not taken. He had marked all the routes for the townspeople to follow on their walking tours. The club-house at Katzenbuckel was his handiwork, and he had gathered together all the fireside legends and folk-songs of the neighbourhood and had them published at Wiesbaden before the war.

The volume contained the legends written up in the simple language of the people, and their songs spoke of love and death and young women's ardours. Just six months before the jubilee of the society Father Allwohn, as the popular old man was called by the peasants, produced a fat manuscript at a committee meeting. It was a play, wrung from the muses on long nights of toil and dedicated by him to the society. He presented it to the society, and all he asked for was that it be produced on the night of the jubilee. Touched by the old man's piety, the committee accepted it unread and entrusted the superintendent of the municipal theatre with the task of producing it. Bringolf left it lying about in a drawer for a long time, and didn't read it until ten days before the jubilee. He promptly went to see Councillor Schrader, who was also on the committee. *The Wild Rodensteiner*, as the play was called, was a rousing and vigorous attack on the Jews, the French, who were referred to as the Foreigners, and the Catholics, who were referred to as the Blacks, and the end of the play consisted in a great massacre of Blacks, Jews and Foreigners. The Rodensteiner struck them dead, and Germany, the cradle of the virtuous, was free once more.

It was absolutely impossible to return the worthy old gentleman's manuscript. It was also impossible to play it in its present form. The only thing was to go and talk to him about it.

Bringolf talked to him for five days on end. In the evening, when he went to see Frau von Berg, bringing with him the manuscript with all the alterations Bringolf had managed to wring from the obstinate old man, there was no end to their laughter. Bringolf managed comparatively easily to get the old man to substitute allegorical figures for the Blacks and the Foreigners. He persuaded the old man that it would be more artistic to do so. For the Blacks

there was substituted a charcoal-burner who led the fair children astray and for the Foreigners a gypsy who stole chickens. The real difficulty was the Jews. On this point Father Allwohn refused to compromise. The Jews were perverters of the people; the peasants could tell you all about that. But, when Bringolf pointed out that Herr Aschaffenburg would certainly cancel his annual subscription to the club house at Katzenbuckel, the old man gave in, with much sighing and cursing. So they converted the Jews to Aliens. But even then Father Allwohn would not sacrifice his hooked noses.

It took five days to re-write the play. Frau von Berg co-operated zealously. They made a musical play of all the folk-songs, and only the return of the wild Rodensteiner was left. Bringolf stood behind the curtain. He had rehearsed his lighting effects three times, because in this production the lighting effects would be the most important feature. The stage in the Casino was very small. There were no dressing-rooms. The actors had to put on their make-up in a draughty passage. Frau von Berg was one of them. She represented the Fatherland.

Down below in the body of the hall the tables were laid. The banquet started at eight o'clock. Then there were to be speeches. The curtain was to go up at half-past nine. At ten o'clock Father Allwohn was to appear on the stage. The flowers had been ordered, to say nothing of a hamper for the old gentleman, containing plenty of brandy.

The whole affair was only to last a half-hour. Afterwards there was to be dancing, and everything would be forgotten.

Councillor Schrader, at the head of the table in the brilliantly lighted hall, rose to his feet. On his right was Father Allwohn. The old man was in a bad temper. He had been preparing for this evening for months past. He had ordered himself a new frock coat for the occasion and the speech in his pocket had been re-written at least ten times. And now everyone was staring not at him but at the man sitting on Councillor Schrader's left; Bäuerle his name was, and forty-five years ago he had been his pupil, and a little good-for-nothing he was too. Father Allwohn listened to

Councillor Schrader's speech. He heard his name being pronounced and he heard himself being thanked in the name of the committee and in the name of the town. Then he got up and made his own speech. As soon as he had finished a waiter brought him a big drinking-horn with silver hoops. He lifted it and filled it with wine to the brim and emptied it at a draught. And the applause knew no bounds. But suddenly Councillor Schrader rang his little bell again and Father Allwohn felt everyone's gaze abandon him.

His head fell sadly forward on his chest. He behaved as if he were asleep.

"Citizens of Siebenwasser," he heard Councillor Schrader say. "This day which we are now celebrating in veneration of our native land and in honour of a man who, in the course of his three score and ten years of love and courage has brought our native land nearer to us has another distinguishing feature."

Father Allwohn gently opened his eyes. How they were all staring at that other man. His father hadn't had a proper shirt to his back, and his mother had to take in washing.

". . . tonight we have before us another magnificent example of love of our native land. Citizens of Siebenwasser, the whole thing seems almost like a miracle. This love of our native land, our native city seems to cast a blessing on this day. A man who left Siebenwasser as a child and went to America and in spite of everything remained a German, has come back to the place where he was born. In the struggle for life he has conquered like a man. He forced good fortune to his will. But he could not rest satisfied with alien gold. With the approach of his old age he made up his mind to return and be with us once again. And he has brought his child with him. We incline ourselves before such fidelity. This is the man, sitting next to me, Johann Kaspar Bäuerle of Baltimore. Johann Kaspar Bäuerle, we welcome you. You are home again. Your native land embraces you once more!"

Schrader lifted his glass. Everyone stood up.

"And thus we greet you, who have remained true to us. We greet you as blood of our blood, as son of our soil. Share our life,

our joys and our sorrows. Citizens of Siebenwasser, I give you the health of Johann Kaspar Bäuerle."

The toast was honoured. A great silence reigned throughout the room. As they put their glasses down everyone seemed slightly embarrassed. But the band struck up *There is a tree in the Odenwald*.

Johann Kaspar Bäuerle stood at the table with tears coursing down his cheeks, singing the song he had learnt at school forty-five years before.

Kilian Kern was sitting in his kitchen, eating. Regina ladled the onion sauce over the potatoes. Kilian silently mashed the potatoes with his fork. Little Hannes lay in his crib, asleep. Outside the wind was driving the clouds hurriedly across the moon.

Kilian Kern rose to his feet. He went over to the door, put on an old soldier's tunic and his cap and took his stick.

"I'm going out for a bit," he said, and he was gone. He went creaking down the staircase. Regina saw him making his way towards the village inn. She cleared away the dishes, wiped the oilcloth table clean, went to the cupboard and fetched the atlas. Carefully she turned over the pages. There it was, Paris. City of his dreams, he called it. At nights, when she crept to him in the partition next to the barn, she never tired of the stories he told. Paris. Regina stared at the page, and her fingers followed the windings of the Seine.

Kilian Kern went to the village inn and drank two glasses of cherry brandy. At the farmers' table they were grumbling at the government.

"He's quite right when he says: kick the Jews out," old Adameck shouted. "The country's not what it was. Three years as soldiers would knock the nonsense out of the fellows!"

"And then there'll be a war, and then we'll all be satisfied," exclaimed Kilian Kern. He paid his bill and walked out without saying good night.

Gerhard Träger was standing in front of his stormtroop. Forty-five men had turned up for the night exercises. The uniforms had

been distributed. They had spent three months saving and scraping before being able to send the money off to Munich. Now at last they stood there in full rig-out. It was a glorious day.

"Pay attention to this, please," Gerhard Träger said. "Fellow-members of the Party, before we begin our night exercise I have an announcement to make. You will all have been surprised at my being the only one not wearing the honoured uniform of the S.A. this evening. I will tell you the reason. Only one young man among us failed to produce the sum necessary to pay for the uniform of a soldier of the Leader. He is poor. We are all poor, but he has nothing. But what he does possess is a spirit of self-sacrifice and an unbounded love for the Leader. That he has proved today. He staked everything for the Leader, for our ideals, for our Movement. For that reason I have given him the brown shirt that was meant for me. I salute him in the Leader's name. I salute S.A.-man Hanns Diefenbach. Heil!"

A rousing chorus of "Heil!" resounded through the night. Then the stormtroop marched off. As they turned into the wood ex-service man Kilian Kern appeared from behind the shadow of a tree and hobbled along behind them.

A gong sounded. The lights went out. Irene was sitting next to her father. There was another stroke of the gong, and the curtain went up. Councillor Schrader leaned over and whispered in Bäuerle's ear: "This is just a little society affair, done for the old gentleman's sake. It's not to be taken seriously." Bringolf had brought all his arts into play. Lighting effects kept on changing the appearance of the stage. Figures in peasant costumes performed dances, and from the pinnacle of a castle a maiden sang a song to the effect that a wicked stranger was tempting her. He lured her into a dungeon in alliance with an enchanted boar. Bringolf arranged drums and rumbling noises off. Frau von Berg, representing Home and Fatherland, was next seen lying on some straw. Evil spirits were sitting on a parapet, dividing up Germany between them.

Frau von Berg started singing.

Heiha, Heiha, hurricane blow
Through the dungeon, through the dungeon.

The chorus answered:

Be still, be still, oh thou that lyest in chains,
Germania, be still.

But Frau von Berg would not be still.

I'll ne'er be still, still ne'er I'll be.
The Rodensteiner must come and save me.
The people cries aloud for strength.
I'll ne'er be still
Until the knights appear
With a sword for the people.

At that the chorus burst into laughter.

The knights, the knights,
They are not here
They swing the horn
And laugh at love
In foreign lands,
Germania.

Then Frau von Berg started shouting, because laughter was threatening to break her rouge:

One day they will come
Even if the castle collapses
The Rodensteiner rushes through the air,
The stranger. One day
He'll discover the delights of his native land
And then he'll sink his sword in the poisoned breast
Of eternal dissension.

"What is all this, father?" Irene asked.

"I've no idea," her father answered.

"It'll soon be over," Councillor Schrader whispered.

The scene changed to a ravine with a peasant's cottage. "Oden-

wald" was written up over the mountain. A knight came in, faltering on a stick.

> Thus I return home, old.
> The path was long, my sin was grave.
> No god has purged it.
> My beard is grey; my country calls.
> I know the land of Italy and the domain of demons;
> I know the shame of foreign gold.
> The sword remains. Treachery devours
> Our people. The mountains are covered in mist.
> No heart beats freely
> Aliens ravage our country.
> My bride lies in chains. I am ready.

A voice: Rodensteiner? Rodensteiner?
Rodensteiner: I sought the treasures of the Indies. What remains?
The dream of these mountains.
Voice: Oh, knight-at-arms? Oh, knight-at-arms?
Rodensteiner: I rode in the invisible host
I let lightning flash into the peasant's house.
Now I go home to the people,
Sick but untouched by evil.
The hilltops are as ever
And mother lives in every bush.
A spectre I, betrayed by alien wiles,
Want you again, oh earth.

(He kneels down and kisses the earth. His magic wand begins to sprout. The earth opens, and Germania rises from the earth, free.)

Frau von Berg raised her hands.

Rodensteiner: What light!
Germania: Free!
Rodensteiner: Which is the way to the people?
Germania: Straight on; follow your heart's bidding.
Rodensteiner: What a miracle! The curse is failing!

Germania: Eia, Eia, sweet boy.
Rodensteiner: Are you my mother?
Germania: Always!

(*He collapses. Germania springs towards him.*)

Germania: Thy message, oh give it
Before Fate cuts the thread;
Oh, give thy message to the people!
Rodensteiner, *standing erect:* Then let them listen.
While foreign poison
Steals away my life and breath:
Ne'er let them lay aside the sword;
Ne'er let them follow the alien's soft words.
Only he has strength who holds the soil
On which he stands.
Let them plough and sow and reap,
And have no trust in foreign shores.
I, Rodensteiner, say it. The world is
Poisonous. Remain at home.
I kneel me down before the Odenwald,
For it is worth more than all the golden streets
That lead the heart astray.
Work here, oh man! Assuage your longing here.
And let the Indies be,
And thrive in that which is near to thee!
Germania: And our Realm?
Rodensteiner: 'Twill come. It will arise.
The day will come when manna
Will rain on you. But you must have
Patience, for the enemy is crafty.
When you have hanged the wicked in your land
You will be strong.
United, you will defy the world.
Germania: So shall it be.
Rodensteiner: Do not forget my yearning.
Germania: Nor yet thy hope. Oh! World!

Rodensteiner: How it all pales before mine eyes. Oh!
What wind is this that blows! Farewell, ye hills!

(*He collapses and dies, while his staff blossoms still more abundantly. Germania approaches the footlights.*)

Germania: Thus all thy children seek
Thee and thee only, Oh! our native land!
And in their dreams they see thee grow immense.
And much abuse hast thou to suffer,
Oh! our country!
But always dost thou rise again
Blessed by the waters of the sea.
And there are none but return to thee,
Oh, suffering one.
You mountains! they return to you;
Rivers!
They return to you;
And not a tear has been in vain
If Germania forgives.

Frau von Berg stood in the full glare of the lights. Sprites sprang from the wings and scattered grapes and apples from their horns of plenty. Softly the band played: *I had a good comrade.* The curtain fell. Germania burst into peals of laughter in the little passage behind the stage.

"Bringolf!" she called out. "Bringolf!"

When he came she fell into his arms.

"Wasn't I good enough for Bayreuth?" she exclaimed.

"Well, you were good enough for some, but not for Winifried," said the superintendent, laughing.

The stormtroop, at Gerhard Träger's orders, had split up into small groups and was scattered about the wood. Their object was a simple one. The Wild Ass Inn, which was situated in the middle of a preserve, was considered to be in a state of siege. No-one was to be allowed to leave it without being observed and captured by

the S.A. The supposition was that Marxist elements were holding a surreptitious meeting at the inn, and it was necessary to intercept all their messengers.

Jürgen and Diefenbach were crouching side by side in a pine wood. This was the first time they had been alone together since the disturbance at the theatre. They lay on the damp foliage. Jürgen was smoking a cigarette.

". . . yes, you're astonished, I can see, but I really am living with a whore, I'm not pulling your leg, I assure you. She's an excellent person too. Makes a living out of love, and all for my sake. But she sticks up for what she thinks. She's not a bourgeois. My dear fellow, the way that woman looks after me, I tell you it's marvellous. She's like a mother to me."

Hanns lay motionless. He felt uncomfortable in his new uniform. A soft mist was slowly mounting across the meadows.

". . . the main thing is not to believe we've got anything to expect from the bourgeoisie. They're a cowardly lot. They're afraid of any kind of revolution. But I met some Communists at Maria's house, her fiancé is one of them. They're the ones if we can only get them. I've spent three evenings arguing with them already. That sort of thing does you good. At least they want something, not like the other scum. What they want, you see, is another kind of world—"

"What do you mean, another kind of world?" asked Hanns.

"Socialism," was Jürgen's answer. "But *we* are the only people who can introduce Socialism. Those fellows haven't seen that yet."

"Does the Leader want Socialism?" Hanns asked in the darkness.

Jürgen laughed.

"If he didn't want it, no-one would follow him. He'll make the right kind of State. Soldiers and workers and peasants. That's the new kind of State we need."

"And what about the others?"

"They've got to be wiped out."

There was a whistle. The two sprang to their feet, and dashed through the fields, and then lay down in the grass once more.

Group Two consisted of the Son of Adameck, the peasant, and a youth named Teifinger.

"Here we are just lying about," Adameck grumbled.

"You're learning something," Teifinger told him.

"If only things would begin to happen. If only we really started dealing with the filthy Communists."

"Patience, man, patience. The Leader has promised—"

"He's got a damn sight too much patience. He ought to do away with Socialism once and for all. This damned Socialism takes all one's earnings away. Things have got to change. When once we start I'll knock everything to pieces."

There was a whistle. They jumped up, and ran three hundred yards. Then they hid themselves in the bushes.

"If it gets as far as that not one of the pigs will remain alive. Not a single Jew or a single Socialist!" said Teifinger panting for breath.

Group Three consisted of Herr Blank, from Siebenwasser, who had put on an extra pair of socks because it was autumn—colds were not to be trifled with—and Hungrich, a surveyor.

"How long do you think it will be before the fun begins?"

"The fun will begin when the Leader gives the orders."

"Fiddlesticks, I know that myself. But when do you think it really will begin?"

"I haven't the slightest idea, but I'm looking forward—"

"When it does come it'll be fine. Then we'll show these university gentlemen something. Damned intellectuals!"

"And the big stores and the co-operative societies."

"The whole dirty lot of them in fact!"

There was a whistle. They sprang into a thicket and flung themselves down upon a bed of pine needles.

Kilian Kern was sitting on a seat. He had climbed Jacob's Ladder. How beautiful were the meadows that lay below him. There were those brown fellows dashing across them. And they wanted to be soldiers. Good Lord! Look how they ran. Just like

a pack of monkeys. Kilian lit a cigar and leisurely exhaled the smoke. The sound of whistles came from down below. The namby-pambies. They ought to come along with me to Verdun, where there was only death—and men. That showed up whether you had any guts in you or not. And if you had been there you didn't want to have any more of this whistling and running about in the fields. All you wanted was to live decently and quietly, and the blood you had lost ought to suffice for your lifetime and the child's too. It certainly ought to be enough for one lifetime. What was it that volunteer had said, the one who was a student and always spoke so cleverly? Comrades, he had said, what we are carrying out here is a blood transfusion for two generations. And when we asked him what transfusion was he said it meant to let our blood flow for the benefit of future generations. That made it clear to us, and when the man was shot in the head and lay on the ground we stood round him silently, and the soldier who had been longest in the line spoke a few words over the shell-hole we buried him in. And in his pack we found a letter to his father, and it said:

"Dear father, the blood that flows here will suffice for a hundred years. It will suffice for generations to come to thrive on." And they read the letter in silence. That was the phrase they sought for every day they killed and were killed.

And the student was dead and buried, and down there those lads were dashing about the field.

Life is in the hands of bounders and crooks, Kilian Kern said to himself.

He hobbled down Jacob's Ladder. And it seemed as though he were climbing deep down into the earth.

Hanns Diefenbach and Jürgen were lying in a thicket, keeping a sharp watch on the path that led to the inn. It was their duty to keep a watch on the entrance and give warning of anyone approaching by blowing a whistle. The object of the manœuvres was to encircle the house and then theoretically capture the supposed Marxist nest.

Hanns did not speak a word. The events of the day had descended upon him like a whirlwind. As yet he saw no firm ground on which to find anchorage. He tried to divert his thoughts and concentrate on the sharp watch he was keeping on the Wild Ass Inn, but that lasted only an hour, and once more thoughts of Holzapfel and Gerhard Träger and the girl he met on the road came back to plague him. The Leader seemed far away. He was alone.

He felt cold. What had he done? What had happened to him? He did not know. How dreadfully mysterious life could be. How quickly perfect peace could give way to tumult, and tumult to this ghastly feeling of isolation. To whom could he open his heart?

Hanns felt the brown shirt on his body, and the shoulder-strap. He fingered it affectionately. He had become a soldier of the Leader. This had been the great piece of good fortune of the day. Nothing mattered now but to obey the Leader's orders. But why had Gerhard Träger asked him always to remain his friend? Why had he promised to write to the Leader so that Hanns might be commended for what he had done? Why had he uttered those remarkable words: "We are a band of men, Hanns, and no one can measure us by the standards of the majority. You too belong to the few." He had listened to him, trembling.

Hanns looked up. Jürgen was sitting next to him, smoking.

". . . at first they wanted to put a lot of nonsense over on me. They said it wasn't right for me to live with a whore, and bleated a lot more moral stuff like that. So I went to area headquarters and asked them bluntly which was at stake, bourgeois morals or the cause. That girl keeps my head above water, I told them. Which of those gentlemen was prepared to do as much?"

Jürgen laughed.

"One shouldn't be guided by moral considerations anyway," he said. "No revolution that guided itself by moral considerations has ever succeeded. Are we a Y.M.C.A? The time for being good and folding one's hands in prayer has gone by. We are soldiers, I told them. They had nothing to say to that, and when I planked down on the table three Party application forms signed by former Com-

munists whom Maria introduced me to they laid their heads together and started whispering. And in the end all they said was that I wasn't to do it too openly. But then I spoke up again, and I said that no harm would be done even if the Socialists did say in their papers that I was an immoral individual, and only a few gossiping old women would take any notice of it anyway. I stand by my Leader, I said, and I bring in the workers. And after that they didn't have anything to say at all."

Jürgen lit another cigarette and spat into the foliage.

"It would be a fine state of affairs if we made a revolution just to save the moral standards of the bourgeoisie. On the contrary, our intention is to abolish those standards. The passions must be free. That will be the life!"

Jürgen was keeping watch over the fields. A number of light signals flashed out.

"The Wild Ass Inn is surrounded," he said.

Hanns lay on the ground, in silence. He could smell the material of his new uniform. He was eighteen years old, and life was going hard with him.

Kilian Kern sat down on the stone balustrade of a bridge which carried the path over the ditch just where it joined the main road. The sky over his head was clear, and the forest was steeped in the soft light of night.

Kilian Kern laughed. That ridiculous whistling was still going on in the wood. A rocket was actually fired. It made a beautiful spectacle over the fields shining in the moonlight.

Kilian Kern had his stick in his hand. He felt he had had enough of this playing at savages, once and for all. The whole village was upside down, and there was no peace left. He was not going to rest until he had found out exactly what they were up to and had given them a piece of his mind. He would go up to them and tell them to stop playing with fire, for in the long run it was always the people who were fooled. He would show them his leg and say: Look, this is what is left of that great time.

Kilian Kern was just going to light a cigarette when he heard

someone calling him. He looked up. Two men were standing in front of him. They were wearing caps similar to those the Austrians wore during the war.

"Good evening," Kilian Kern said.

The two men remained silent, staring at him from the other side of the road.

"All right, then, it isn't a good evening," Kilian Kern said, shrugging and lighting his cigarette.

"What are you doing here?"

"Smoking," Kilian Kern answered.

The two men crossed the road and came towards him.

"Hallo, Herr Hungrich," said Kilian Kern. "What are you doing here and why are you dressed up like that?"

"What are you doing spying round here?"

Kilian Kern got up.

"The woods are public property, aren't they?" he said. "Can't one go for a walk in them if one wants to?" He hobbled over to the surveyor. "And what about you?" he asked. "I suppose you've come here to look at the moon because you can't see it from your own home. Eh?"

"Shut up and get out of here!"

"Very good, paymaster," Kilian roared, and his stick descended with a mighty and resounding thwack upon the broad backside of Herr Hungrich, whose war service had consisted of acting as paymaster in a Belgian base-camp.

Hungrich leapt high in the air. Kilian raised his stick and made for the men again.

"Savages!" he bellowed. "Savages!"

Hungrich and his fellow savage disappeared rapidly into the undergrowth.

"I see," Kilian called out. "Just like in the war! Run away when things get a bit nasty!"

He sat down on the stone wall again.

Dressed up lot of slackers. Just let them try it on him.

Three whistles resounded through the wood. Answering whistles came from all sides.

Hungrich was standing in the moonlight in the middle of the field, shouting:

"An attack! An attack!"

At the first signal Hanns and Jürgen sprang to their feet and dashed over to the limping Hungrich.

"Marxists in sight!" roared Hungrich, pointing towards the bridge.

"Come on!" Jürgen called out, and started running. Hanns started running too. They undid their shoulder-straps.

They reached the main road, and saw the bridge, and a man sitting there. They dashed up to him.

Kilian Kern had leisurely unbuckled his artificial leg and rested his stump on the wall. That was how he stood waiting for them in the moonlight.

"Savages!" he roared. "Savages!"

Jürgen sprang at him, but a hard blow struck him on the chin. Sparks appeared before his eyes and he slumped to the ground. He heard the other men running up behind him. As he fell to the ground Hanns threatened the Marxist from the flank. His ears were humming, and his heart was full of joy. A fight was a blessed relief after the troubles of the day. He made for the man with his shoulder-strap, and struck him twice on the chest. He was very close to him. Just as he raised his fist to strike the man on the chin a strong hand seized his hair and pulled him down. He tried to protect himself with his hands and he clutched at the man's clothing and caught a glimpse of the moonlight in the water under the bridge—and then the blow descended. Kilian Kern brought his artificial leg down on the boy's head, and Hanns lost consciousness.

Just at that moment Gerhard Träger arrived on the field of battle.

The nucleus of his stormtroop was around him. Hanns lay prostrate on the bridge and Jürgen was grovelling on the floor. The man over by the wall was brandishing his leg in the air—defending himself with his own limb.

"Stop!" Träger called out. Everyone drew back. Träger walked slowly over towards Kilian Kern.

"What is the matter here?"

"Ask that savage surveyor of yours, the cowardly scrimshanker!" Kilian Kern shouted. "But don't you come too near me!"

He brandished his leg in the air once more, and laughed, and pointed to Hungrich, who was standing behind everybody else, and called out:

"Is that the stuff you want to make your revolution with, lieutenant? Disgusting!"

Träger ordered silence, and walked up closer to the disabled man.

"Fellow-German . . ." he said.

"I'm not your fellow-German!" Kilian Kern roared. "I refuse to be your fellow-German! The whole humbug's starting again. And the next time we're in the same old mess you'll say it wasn't your fault!"

He raised his left. Träger said nothing. He dropped his head a little. He recognized the man before him. This was the real man of the trenches. This was how they had groused in 1917 and 1918, and done their duty all the same.

Gerhard Träger beckoned to two of his men. They picked Hanns up and laid him on the grass.

The officer knelt down by the young man's side and opened his shirt. How soft his skin was. He felt his head. Träger rose to his feet.

"Take him back to my house," he said.

They improvised a stretcher and four young men carried Hanns away. The lieutenant stayed with the ex-service man.

"Stormtroop 43," he called out: "March back to the village. And in strict order, if you please. Any incidents will be detrimental to the Movement. Section Leader Winkler will take over command. Stormtrooper Hungrich is to report to me later."

The men marched away in the moonlight, with the boy's body on a stretcher at the head of the procession.

Gerhard Träger sat down on the wall, next to Kern. The ex-soldier buckled on his artificial leg and wanted to take his departure.

"Just a minute, Herr Kern."

Kilian Kern stopped.

"I just wanted to say that I cannot tell you how sorry I am that this incident should have occurred, and how much I regret an old soldier of the line like you not being in our ranks. You belong to us, Kern. Men like you belong to Adolf Hitler. It is men like you he wants."

The officer on the wall next to him went on whispering persuasively in his ear. Kilian knew these methods from 1918.

"That doesn't cut any ice with me, Herr Träger," he said. "I'm old enough to be able to think for myself. And I've got enough brains to see that what you're doing leads straight to rack and ruin. After all, you can't go on playing around in the woods like this without its boiling over in the end. And then we'll be in the soup again, and once more it won't be anybody's fault. I'm not interested in politics, all I'm interested in is my life. You may be right here and you may be right there, but what you are doing to the people is bad. You were in it, and you know what it was really like. No people could stick it out a second time. If it happens again the whole country will go to the dogs, lieutenant, I feel it in my bones, the country will simply bleed to death. And it'll be your fault. It's no good shaking your head, lieutenant. It's you who bring unrest into the homes of the people with your talk of wounded honour. It's you who incite the young people and put ideas into their heads. Keep your hands off the people, lieutenant. What the people want is peace!"

That was how Kilian Kern talked to Gerhard Träger in the wood at Erlenback. Then he walked off, hobbling away between the trees without saying good night, back to the village, where the dogs were barking and the moonlight lay like gentle dew over the roofs and fields.

CHAPTER X

A FEW miles from Siebenwasser the river curved placidly round a hill on which there stood a building in the Empire style. The morning sunshine shone upon its high-windowed façade, which faced the south. A light mist hung over the vine terraces mounting tier upon tier. The earth was still wet with dew, and the grass was fragrant after the coolness of the night. White clouds moved across the sky. Autumn had tinted the foliage of the woods.

Johann Kaspar Bäuerle had left his inn soon after breakfast. He walked upstream. The road was uphill and the valley grew narrower and narrower. At the foot of the hill Bäuerle stopped and sat down on a heap of stones. He took a piece of paper from his pocket and read: estate of Weissenfels, three hundred acres, including eighteen acres of vineyards and twenty-five of woodland. Stables, farm buildings, manor house. Property of Fräulein Ursel Fabricius." He had obtained this extract from the register of landed property two days previously. At Councillor Schrader's house the other night he had discussed what form his activities in Siebenwasser should take with several gentlemen of the town, and it was then that he heard the story of Fräulein Fabricius. When Councillor Schrader came to the end of the narrative Dr. Holzapfel, the headmaster, said to him:

"If you succeed in persuading the lady to sell and set about restoring prosperity to an estate that has fallen into decay, you will have exciting work ahead of you, besides the satisfaction of saving one of the gems of our native land."

They had all agreed with Dr. Holzapfel, and Herr Aschaffenburg added that it would be a patriotic action to get the estate out of the hands of a madwoman. They sat with Bäuerle over their wine for a long time, thinking of all the things that could be done with the estate should Fräulein Fabricius consent to sell. They even got down to figures and started working out costs, and totted up long columns on large, white sheets of paper; and the one most fertile in ideas was Bäuerle himself.

The estate would be a model of its kind. He would shrink from no expense. His cheeks glowed. His imagination ran riot. His enthusiasm communicated itself to the others, and they became as thrilled as he with the idea that Weissenfels was to be his. That was the right life—to till the soil on which one stood, to live with the seasons, to build out of the forces of Nature and to reap. The project seemed a worthy one for a man like Bäuerle who had returned to his native land. What finer work could his country offer him than this?

Bäuerle put the piece of paper back in his pocket and climbed up the steps which led to the Weissenfels estate. His steps were slow and peaceful. Anyone watching him from the valley would have thought him a peasant pacing his own field.

Old Fabricius bought Weissenfels shortly after the war of 1870. He had been wounded at Sedan and taken to a military hospital at Stuttgart. The brave officer soon captivated the heart of his nurse, whose father was the owner of a large mill. The girl, who was nearly twenty years his junior, saw in him her ideal hero and the day the bells rang out proclaiming peace and her wedding day was the happiest in her life. Five years later Fabricius retired from the service, came into his father-in-law's money and realized his youthful dream of buying an estate. From that day on the wrecking of his married life began. He left his wife and child to their own resources. He would get up early in the morning and start work on the farm. He worked in the fields just like his own labourers. At vintage time he would stand among the vintagers, a basket on his back and a pipe in his mouth, and carry the grapes to the yard where the vats were. He spent his evenings drinking

with the Weissenfels peasants at the village inn. A meal had to be ready for him in his room when he came home, and he would bolt it to the accompaniment of two more bottles of beer and then tumble into bed. He had meals with his wife and child only on Sundays. He hated Sundays. You weren't allowed to go out into the fields and, for some incomprehensible reason, you had to be careful of your clothes. To make matters worse, the dear wife would start playing the piano and if you did anything at all playful she would run into her room and lock herself in and start crying. What did a refined person like that know of the joys of the earth? Reading and playing the piano, indeed! You weren't even allowed to smack your lips when the sauce from the roast hare ran down your chin.

When Ursel, his daughter, was eight years old, his wife went away for a holiday and didn't come back. He didn't notice it until somebody drew his attention to it. He left his lawyer to deal with the situation and imported the red-cheeked Fräulein Banse from Westphalia to be his housekeeper. She was efficient and devout, and exhaled a faint odour of perspiration and lavender water. When Ursel asked after her mother Fräulein Banse invariably replied:

"That's not a matter to talk about, Ursel."

Once her father overheard her asking this question. He laughed, and said Ursel's mother was a fine lady, with a great deal of soul, and entirely unsuited to agricultural life. Very soon Ursel's picture of her mother was endowed with the glamour of a lovely and a distant world. In the evening, when her father came back from the inn and went into Fräulein Banse's room and the old man's laughing oaths and the pious sayings of the housekeeper mingled into a real love duet, the child would steal on bare feet down the corridor and into the drawing-room, where her mother's photograph hung. No one disturbed her at this worship. The old man gave explicit instructions that Ursel was not to be stopped from doing whatever she liked so far as her mother was concerned. And while he comforted himself with the lady from Westphalia, Ursel lay in bed shivering at the thought of life.

"Do you know Wilhelm Raabe?" Councillor Schrader asked Johann Kaspar in the course of his story. Bäuerle assured him that he did. "If you know the best work he ever wrote, *The People of the Forest,* you will understand the destiny of Ursel Fabricius. Her story might have been written by Raabe. If you want to understand the Germans, you must read Raabe and not Goethe and all the other great names." Schrader smiled, and went on with the story of Ursel Fabricius.

To Bäuerle it seemed the story of a vanished age, an age which had never really touched him. He had been in the States, fighting for his existence, and he had difficulty in understanding all that Schrader told him. He did not understand, yet within himself rose a kindred feeling of pain and grief. Ursel Fabricius seemed to him a symbol of the defunct Germany he had hated with a hatred inherited from his father. He found nothing to laugh at in the story; for he found nothing human laughable.

He learned how Ursel grew into a shy, beautiful girl, much given to reverie at her piano and to reading poetry. She hated her father and fled to the jasmine arbour for refuge from his violent ways. She came back from boarding school with a portrait of a young man in a silver casket, and subsequently an officer actually did turn up at Weissenfels, a lieutenant in the Blue Dragoons, and the old man did not procrastinate for long but quickly gave his consent, because he wanted to be rid of his daughter. Her engagement lasted for eight weeks, and she spent the time dreaming, as happy as a bird.

The old man declared that now everything was right with the world. The estate was free of debt, Ursel was off his hands and three hundred thousand marks in government securities were at the bank. The wine was good and Fräulein Banse as soft as a haystack on manœuvres. But one day in September the old man collapsed in the vineyards. They carried him in to the house. Ursel fled to her room and Fräulein Banse fetched vinegar and strong essences. Old Fabricius lay in the hall with the earth of his estate sticking to his boots and jacket. He opened his eyes once more and a broad smile spread over his features when he saw Fräulein Banse.

In the presence of the servants standing nervously in the background, he raised his hand and slapped the fräulein hard, twice.

"Follow me soon!" he said, and paled, and his breathing changed to a death-rattle and when the sun rose in the morning he died.

At this point in the story Councillor Schrader ordered more wine and the men drank in silence. Then he went on:

"Old Fabricius' body was hardly cold when the officer in the Blue Dragoons suddenly quitted the service, appeared on the estate, confessed his gambling debts to Ursel and played on her heartstrings to such an extent that she gave him not only a cheque for fifty thousand marks but herself into the bargain. She spent three weeks of rapture. The wedding was to take place at the conclusion of the year of mourning. The officer cashed the cheque and went to Baden-Baden to pay his debts. Ursel counted the hours, but he never returned. The jasmine arbour withered, and the November wind swept across the fields. For months Ursel did not leave her room. Then an envelope with strange stamps on it arrived. A servant took it up to the girl's room. Ursel sat over the letter for a long time. The letter was brief, and was signed by a captain in the English Army. He said it was his painful duty to inform Ursel Fabricius of the death of Lieutenant Dovivat, fallen for the Queen in the Boer War. He was fulfilling Lieutenant Dovivat's last wishes in asking her to forgive him for Christ's sake.

"Two days later Ursel Fabricius ordered a fire to be lit in the gun-room. When the logs were ablaze and all the lights had been lit she came down the stairs in a white taffeta dress, carrying a pile of books. She sent the servants away. She stayed in the gun-room alone in front of the fire. Beside her lay the books, volumes of poetry bound in soft leather with gold lettering, and violets pressed between the pages, novels with costly illustrations and rare bookplates, albums with verse written in them and portraits pasted inside. She threw them all into the flames, one after the other. In silence she watched the poetry of her youth burn to ashes. A month later she let the estate to the first bidder, and travelled to Paris by way of Strasbourg."

Bäuerle reached the first vineyard. The grapes were rotting on the canes. The grass stood high between the vines, weeds grew round the stems. Bäuerle sat down. He saw the manor house, the valley, the painful gentleness of the landscape and he saw Schrader again in the soft armchair, fingering his wine-glass, his peaceful, patient eyes gazing at his hands.

"Possibly it was for want of so-called great events that we attached excessive importance at that time to stories such as this. Interest in individual destinies had not yet been extinguished by a World War. But Ursel Fabricius was finally forgotten. No one ever thought of her outside the Darmstädter Bank, where her name headed an account of impressive size. Cheques came in every quarter from many capitals and distant lands, and they were punctually met. Then came the war and Ursel Fabricius was heard of no more. But her rents were regularly paid into her bank. Her account grew. It was uncanny to watch the figures accumulate, though there was no trace of the woman. It was then I felt for the first time the utter senselessness of money. It seemed to be leading an independent existence, apart from human life. After my wound I worked in the bank and had to look after her account. As I contemplated the accumulating totals I felt as though hair and nails were growing on a corpse. After all, one was particularly susceptible to the uncanny at that time. There was nothing secure to which a thinking person could hold on."

And Schrader fell silent once more. Bäuerle, sitting on a wall on the bright hillside, saw the men nod their heads at the councillor's words.

Dr. Holzapfel stood up and started walking up and down the room. He upset a glass of brandy. "I shiver each time I hear the story," he said.

"So do I," said Schrader. "I can never forget that day in September, nineteen-twenty-three. I had gone to the bank to attend to something when an elderly lady walked in. I still remember it vividly. She was wearing a silver-grey coat and her hair was bobbed. That struck me particularly, because it contrasted so strongly with

her ravaged face. With her was a young man of the gigolo type, such as one often saw during the inflation period. I was just arranging my papers at the counter when she gave her name. One had grown accustomed to a great deal during those years, but I confess that when Ursel Fabricius, whom I remembered as a pretty girl in the nineties, stood at my side the thought of what life can make of us made me feel slightly giddy. The clerk came back and asked her to go and see the manager. With heavy footsteps she walked across the hall to the upholstered door, the gigolo behind her. I took up my papers and sat down on a bench to wait for her. We had danced a minuet together once, on Shrove Tuesday. She was dressed as a porcelain doll, I as a prince. Scarcely ten minutes passed when suddenly we heard a hoarse cry. The clerks rushed into the manager's office, and I behind them, and what should meet our eyes but the spectacle of our excellent manager, Megerle, sitting in a chair, with the gigolo holding his arms and Ursel trying to strangle him.

" 'Thief!' Ursel was shrieking, her grey hair all awry. The table was strewn with documents and accounts. 'Thief!' Naturally we dashed to Megerle's rescue.

"Meanwhile the cashier had fetched the police. It was revealed that Ursel Fabricius' worldly wealth was just sufficient to pay her bill at the Blue Bear Inn. At that time I was chairman of the police committee and I had no difficulty in preventing them from taking official proceedings, and Megerle had no wish to prosecute either. I talked to Ursel Fabricius for three hours, but she made no answer. She did not even tell me where she had been living during all those years, in fact she told me nothing at all. She went all the way to Weissenfels on foot, and a lad with a barrow walked behind her with her trunk.

"Since then no inhabitant of Siebenwasser has set eyes on Ursel Fabricius. She has not left Weissenfels for four years. The estate is falling into decay. There is neither sowing nor reaping. Ursel has only a few acres tilled. The rent the peasants in the village pay is a few sacks of potatoes or flour. Only an old servant stayed on with her, and sometimes she comes into town to buy Ursel

some brandy. If you ask her how Ursel is, she only laughs and taps her forehead. We have tried everything we could think of officially and unofficially, and once the vicar of Weissenfels actually managed to force his way in and talk to her. When he remonstrated with her for letting the farm run to waste and the cornfields grow arid and the stables moulder, she exclaimed:

"'Quite right! and so they shall!'"

Bäuerle rose to his feet. The stone on which he had been sitting was cold. He walked slowly on.

The gate which separated the farm from the drive had broken down. The mortar in the outer wall was loose, and many of the bricks had fallen. Bäuerle walked into the farm. The stables were on the right. Rotten straw hung in the fissures. The troughs were empty. Several emaciated cats were in the beams. Opposite the stables was a dried-up pond, formerly no doubt the watering-place for the cattle. Poisonous green slime covered the solid mud. A rusty plough lay near a broken-down well.

No sound of animal or human being relieved the silence. Only a few leaves which had fallen from the walnut tree rustled in the wind.

Bäuerle went up to the house. He had been told that it was always locked. While he stood considering whether to burst the door open or not, he heard the sound of a key in the lock.

Bäuerle hurriedly hid himself in an open shed. Through a hole in the wall he saw a fat old woman, carrying a basket, come out of the house, walk down the steps and go towards the kitchen garden. Bäuerle distinctly saw her put the key back into the lock without turning it. She left it there.

As soon as the woman had disappeared behind the kitchen garden fence Bäuerle emerged from the shed and made a dash for the house. He walked in through the door. A damp, musty smell assailed his nostrils.

Bäuerle saw a flight of stairs. He went up them and stopped on the first landing. "Hullo!" he called out, but there was no answer. But all of a sudden he heard a shriek. It was the maid, staring up at him from the foot of the staircase.

Bäuerle rushed up the remaining stairs and came to a door, which was locked; he heaved against the door twice with his shoulder. The door gave way and Bäuerle found himself in a darkened room. The maid was shrieking and crying behind him.

"Fräulein Fabricius!" Bäuerle called out. As there was no reply he went over to the windows and opened the shutters, and bright light flooded the room.

Johann Kaspar was startled. Before him was a creature, half bird, half-human. She was standing in the pathetic attitude of a tragedy queen. An untidy wig was perched above her sparrow-like face, and ragged remnants of her real hair protruded underneath. A grey-green garment, a kind of dressing gown, covered with lace, was suspended from her shoulders. She was clutching the back of her chair with her trembling, bony hands, the veins of which protruded like snakes. Fear, anger and an animal-like shyness were in the red, baggy eyes with which she stared at the intruder.

"Fräulein Fabricius," said Bäuerle, going nearer, "it is necessary to break into your house in order to talk to you."

Ursel Fabricius did not move. The maid was standing in the corner, weeping. Bäuerle sat on the table, clasping his hands over his knees. He was determined not to move until the woman spoke.

"My dear Fräulein Fabricius," he began. "I sit here before you after bursting open your door, a house-breaker, a wicked man intruding upon you from the outside world, where the sun so treacherously shines, and it is only natural that you should jump to the conclusion that I belong to those fine persons who swindled and betrayed you—worse than robbers, for robbers at least take what they want quite openly. But I have to inform you, my dear Fräulein Fabricius, that I only came to this beautiful country ten days ago, after many years abroad in the United States. I, too, left Siebenwasser consumed with a terrible hatred for my native land, and in my new life in America I determined to think no more of what my fellow-Germans had done to me. My father died because of them and my mother had followed him to a strange land. They could no longer bear to live in their own country,

and they saw the madness of our fellow-countrymen as the madness it really was, if you see what I mean, my dear lady. They wanted in the first place to be human beings, you see. But at that time it was impossible. If you weren't willing to join in beating the big drum you were left out in the cold, and if you thought it was possible to live without huzzaing all the time, pretty soon you got tripped up. If you didn't do the same as they did you didn't have a country."

Ursel Fabricius moved. She let go the back of the chair. She sat down by the table and stared at this man who did not look like a German at all.

"For forty-five years I grieved every time I thought of Germany," Bäuerle went on. "For forty-five years I was ashamed of my native land. Yes, when war broke out I secretly beseeched God to deny victory to the Kaiser. Honestly, when I thought of my country and the wicked arrogance of its leaders I could do nothing else. And sure enough it happened as it was bound to happen, and they had to drain the goblet to its very dregs. And when I thought of the calamities that were to fall upon the people, I wept. It was worse, my dear lady, than being betrayed by one's best friend."

Ursel Fabricius made a sign to the maid, who went to a cupboard, fetched a bottle of brandy and put it on the table, with a tumbler. Ursel poured some brandy into the glass and handed it to Bäuerle. Johann Kaspar drank. The brandy burned his throat. He went on talking.

"I know exactly how the German people were betrayed," he said. "First, for decade after decade, they were told they were the best and finest people in the world. And then there came the dreadful war, and they were told it was a sacred thing and that it would be followed by the Germans' Holy Realm. And then when hell broke loose, they were left to their own resources and made to pay for their dream with their possessions, down to the last thing they owned. And all the time they were lulled with the words faith and honour, but when it came to the point the faith was broken, and an even more fearful act of treachery was prepared against them. Betrayal and treachery alone were left. I know it, my dear

lady, and you know it too, and that is why I have come to you now."

Ursel Fabricius' eyes were glued on the man. The maid was standing silent by the door, with folded arms.

"You see, my dear lady, I came to you with nothing up my sleeve. I do not want to persuade you in any possible way. But I want to buy your estate."

Bäuerle got down from the table and took a seat next to Ursel. She raised the glass of brandy and drank, as if to his health. Bäuerle nodded his head in acknowledgment.

"I understand you so well," he said, "and there is nothing I understand better than the hatred you feel. I know what you have been through, and I know there is nothing worse than a native land that betrays you. But after the war I looked at Germany and believed she was bound to perish as a just retribution for her sins. I believed she was bound to perish, for her life was poisoned by treachery and brute force, and then I suddenly read her Constitution. Women know little of the working of the State, my dear lady, and least of all do they know that the foundations of the old State were based on evil. Yes, my dear lady, that is the truth. But now I saw such pure and noble thoughts arising within our land, and the phrases I read were composed in such a reasonable spirit, that I recognized that the poison had suddenly disappeared. The Prussians have marched away, I said to myself, and home I came. And now I am able to assure you that they really have gone. Their last act of treachery was the inflation, the robbing of the people by their beaten leaders. That was the last inferno through which the German people had to pass. It was at that time you lost your faith. But, my dear lady, that time is past and gone. You have not known Germany in these last five years. The whole world has respect for Germany and is well-disposed towards us. People believe in its peaceful genius now as in the old days they dreaded its war-like demon. I am happy to have lived to see the change. Not barracks but dwelling-houses grow now at the outskirts of the cities. And everything is working towards healing the fearful wounds of the last fifty years. But living in seclusion here

you have missed all this, dear lady. Go about the country and see the peace and the healing that are taking place!"

Bäuerle stopped talking and looked at Ursel Fabricius, that human wreck. And suddenly he saw her laugh. It was not good laughter. And after the laughter there came her voice. It was not a good voice.

"No, no," Ursel giggled, "I don't trust the Germans. They will go on being treacherous, they will go on hating peace. They will betray everyone who is good to them."

Bäuerle rose to his feet.

"That would be the end of the world," he exclaimed. "Neither God nor man could stand it; for it would lead to a fearful end."

"It will lead to a fearful end," replied Ursel. "Go back to America. What do you want with an estate? It ought to fall into decay. Everything ought to fall into decay."

"No," said Bäuerle. "It shall not fall into decay. I will buy it from you."

Ursel Fabricius rose to her feet, hobbled over to a desk, spent some time rummaging in a drawer and produced a piece of paper.

"I will sell the estate and permit it to be regenerated on the following terms," she said.

She handed Bäuerle a piece of paper. He read:

MY TERMS: WE DEMAND THAT THE MAYOR AND THE BANK MANAGER COME TO US AND APOLOGIZE FOR THE BETRAYAL.
WE WILL BE GENEROUS
IF THEY ARE HUMBLE
WE WILL HAND OVER THE ESTATE
IF THEY CONFESS
THEIR THEFT
IF THEY DO NOT COME TO US
WE WILL LET THE HOUSE FALL TO PIECES
BUT IF THEY APOLOGIZE
WE ARE READY
TO FORGIVE GERMANY AND THEM.

Bäuerle rose to his feet. "I will give your message to the gentlemen," he said. He walked towards the door without a word. The maid showed him out of the house. Johann Kaspar walked slowly back to Siebenwasser through the untilled fields. How the woman hates, he said to himself.

He met Councillor Schrader the same evening. They talked it over for a long time. Eventually they telephoned to Megerle and he joined them. An hour later he said: "If the thing doesn't go any further I'm willing to go through with it." They made an appointment for the following Tuesday.

Next morning Bäuerle went to see Ebbinghaus, the lawyer who managed Ursel Fabricius' affairs. An agreement was drawn up, and Johann Kaspar learnt of another condition. Half the purchase price was to be paid in gold deposited in the Bank of England and the remainder in Swiss francs. Bäuerle cabled for gold and deposited the Swiss francs at the lawyer's.

A few days later three men might have been seen leaving Siebenwasser at nightfall by car. They drove upstream. They parked the car in a pathway shortly before reaching Weissenfels, then walked silently through the vineyards. Ahead of them they saw the manor house, every window of which was illuminated. The men stumbled through the darkness. They reached the farm and walked past the dilapidated stables. They held each other by the hand, for there was no moon and the night was stormy. Bäuerle groped his way up the steps and rapped at the door. The maid opened it. She wore a white apron and a cap above her fat face.

The men were shown into the gun-room on the first floor, where a large table was laid with valuable plate and dishes. Wine and champagne glasses gleamed in the light of the chandeliers.

Ursel Fabricius was standing at the head of the table. She had on a bright taffeta dress with wide sleeves. The elegant curls of a grey silk wig adorned her powdered forehead.

The men bowed to her in silence. Ursel nodded and sat down. The men sat down too. There was a gap between them and

Ursel. They sat by themselves, with Ursel higher up at the head of the table.

A small bell was at Ursel's right hand. She rang it and the maid came in, carrying two heavy dishes, one of which contained potatoes and the other cream cheese. The men helped themselves to cream cheese and potatoes in silence.

"Bon appétit, messieurs," said Ursel, raising her glass and making a sign to the maid.

The maid filled the visitors' glasses from a champagne bottle.

"Mumm, *drapeau américain,"* Ursel remarked with a smile, raising her glass. Schrader, Megerle and Bäuerle stood up and one after the other they walked across to the woman, bowed, and clinked glasses. Then they drank the water.

"À votre santé, messieurs!"

The woman's eyes were shining feverishly; their gaze seemed to pierce the three men through and through. They burned with the white flame of a fearful hatred.

"You gentlemen are acquainted with my terms?"

"We are ready to fulfill them," said Councillor Schrader, staring down at his plate.

Ursel Fabricius rose to her feet.

"Without query or cavil?" she asked.

"Without query or cavil," Megerle answered.

The men rose to their feet too. The maid left the room. The lights shone brightly in the chandeliers. Antlers, heavy six-pointers, hung on the walls, interspersed with prints of gentlemen on horseback in hunting pink.

The maid came back with a leather case in her hand. Ursel opened it and took from it a white sheet of paper, which she unfolded. She stretched herself to her full height. On her bird-like face was the horrid laughter of a long-dreamed-of victory. Her voice came shrill.

"In the name of the City of Siebenwasser and in the name of the Darmstädter Bank we declare ourselves guilty of faithlessness and treachery to Ursel Fabricius. We cheated Ursel Fabricius of her goods and chattels. We gave obedience to a State that trod

all human and Christian principles beneath its feet and dedicated itself to the devil, and we declare before God and all the swindled that we knowingly betrayed the people, and we confirm all this by our plain and audible affirmation."

Ursel lowered the piece of paper and gazed triumphantly at the men sitting there with bowed heads. Their arms drooped motionlessly from their shoulders. Bäuerle held his breath. The room danced round him.

Councillor Schrader slowly rose to his feet, approached Ursel and bowed.

"Yes," he said.

Megerle followed him and bowed and said "Yes" too.

Ursel Fabricius held on to the table with her quivering hands. The colour had gone from her lips. She raised her hand and pointed to Bäuerle.

"And you are witness," she exclaimed, so fiercely that her voice broke and only hoarse croaking sounds came forth. "You have seen how they humbled themselves," she said. "That is what they always do when the water is up to their necks. No people can suffer so importunately and vainly as these Germans. Do not trust them when they repent. Treachery is in their blood. Yes, you fine gentlemen of Siebenwasser, you cheated us of more than our goods. You took away our trust in man's word, our trust in the law, and our trust in the suzerainty of God. That is what you always do when you have it in your power."

Ursel Fabricius stopped, trembling all over. The maid rushed to her and held her up.

She regained control of herself, and the gleam of a more tender expression came over her face as she addressed Bäuerle.

"Here is the contract," she said. "I shall go to the lawyer's tomorrow. Tomorrow I take my departure. Tomorrow you will be in possession of my home. Take it, and free the fields of their barrenness. It is good land. Take it, and hold it firmly. But keep on the alert, I tell you, keep on the alert!"

She put the document down on the table. Bäuerle went towards her and extended his hand.

"Ursel," he said and his voice was gentle. "Ursel, I knew you when we were both very small. You often used to drive across the market-place in the gig. I remember it quite distinctly. You wore a silk dress with a white lace collar."

Ursel Fabricius raised herself to her full height. Not a muscle moved in her face. The light went out of her eyes.

"Adieu," she said. "Adieu."

It was late when the men walked back through the vineyards. They held each other's hands, as on a rope. Bäuerle led the way with a pocket-lamp. No star was to be seen. A sharp north-east wind swept through the grass. There was a smell of earth and fallen leaves.

BOOK TWO

CHAPTER I

SIEBENWASSER lay in the grip of a hard winter. Little snow fell, but the air was filled with frost.

An icy wind swept across the bare fields, howled through the cracks and crannies of the houses, drove the heat back into the stoves.

Animals from the surrounding woods swarmed for refuge to the neighborhood of the villages. Many died before finding the food the people put out for them. The earth cracked beneath the cold.

Between the upper and the lower bridge the ice had jammed. Ice-block piled up on ice-block and jagged lumps, hardened by the north wind, overflowed on to the fields. Frosty dust whirled along the streets. Short time was worked in offices and factories, and the schools were closed, because fires were ineffective against the cold.

One night the ice broke with a tremendous crash. The wind had changed at noon, and a dry warm Föhn wind howled down the valley. It blew down the chimneys, drove the rasping smoke back into the rooms, brought the slates clattering down from the roofs. When evening came the gale grew fiercer. Almost every hour the lights failed and Siebenwasser was plunged in darkness. Telegraph posts collapsed across the roads. The wind left a broad trail of devastation in its wake.

The breaking of the ice was accompanied by a deep roaring sound. It began under the hill on which the estate of Weissenfels lay. The blocks of ice started moving, with much groaning and rumbling. There was a booming along the valleys as of a bombardment. Two wooden bridges collapsed with the sound of thunder.

A frozen-in coal barge was crushed to splinters, and the ice dashed furiously down towards the bridge at Siebenwasser, where the ice had formed itself into a formidable jam. The riverside parapet was utterly destroyed. The rumbling grew deeper and deeper, and above it all the wind whistled in wild discord.

The struggle lasted for four hours. Then, when the thin light of morning peeped cautiously over the mountains, a deafening crash shattered the air. The ice piled up with a roar, then tumbled over the bridge and between the piers into the roaring flood below.

The people of Siebenwasser thought it was an earthquake and came dashing out of their houses. The fire alarm resounded through the early morning. But the bridge stood firm. The river was free. An unhealthy warmth lay over the city.

Gerhard Träger was sitting in his small kitchen. The tiles were rattling as though death were drumming on the roof. It had been going on like this for three days. Yesterday the chimney had fallen in, and today the wind was blowing right down on the hearth. Soot and sparks swirled round the kitchen. The room had become absolutely unbearable. The wind howled down the open fire-place and blew the burning splinters off the fire. For three days Träger had been living in the kitchen. He had shifted his camp bed into it, and placed the table against the hearth. The electric light was out of order. The wires had been torn by the collapse of the chimney. His oil lamp smoked abominably. The flame flickered at every gust.

Träger had put on his old officer's tunic. It was warmer than his brown shirt. Influenza was rampant in the village. The thing to do was to swill brandy and plenty of it. That did your heart good.

He poured himself out a glass. The cottage was in the grip of the gale. The doors were shaking. Knives and forks clattered in the kitchen cupboard. Twigs were blown against the window. The old chests were rumbling in the cellar.

Gerhard Träger pulled the rug closer round his legs, drew the

lamp nearer his writing block, poured the brandy into his freezing body and began:

"My dear Hanns, I have just crept into the kitchen to answer your letter. It was ungrateful of me to have left it unanswered for so long. But I am in the right mood now. The Föhn is howling around the house, roaring and whistling and howling. It's the right weather for an old soldier. I'm glad the Lord isn't a pacifist either! But to come to the questions you ask. I just want to say that I understand all you write very well. Life isn't a one-way street, and only fools never know doubt. So if tormenting thoughts suddenly arise in you there is no need to apologize. Provided you do not remain stuck in the condition of doubt it is all perfectly in order. Otherwise you grow into one of those intellectuals who make of their boyish doubts a business for their mature age. You know what the Leader thinks of these undeveloped individuals—empty nuts who actually want to be cracked. You can take it from me that all of us within the Movement not only sympathize with you in your scruples but will do all that is in our power to help you. You should be glad that the Movement and the Leader are there, because without them, left to yourself, you, with your intelligence and your sincerity might very well end up where so many fine young men of the pre-war era ended—either in cynicism or in a fruitless and premature disgust with life. The great thing that Adolf Hitler has done is that he has stemmed the floor of despair abroad among the people, and given to youth, who declined to grow fat and bourgeois and yet did not know where to turn, a rock to cling to. But more of that later.

"You ask: What about justice, and you go straight to the heart of the matter and say:

"'Up to a few months ago I believed that everything the Party did and said was right and good. But when I read the words of the Leader about heads rolling in the sand I had a feeling of alarm, and I was quite unable to understand how these words could give pleasure to my school-mates at the High School here in Hanau. I thought about it for a long time, but I could come to no conclusion. And I happened to make the acquaintance of a Jew in

my class, an incredibly fine and gentle human being. I've often been in his room. He has a marvellous library, and I assure you that I have never heard anyone talk so affectionately about our poets as he. Is he a wicked person? He is a member of the Socialist Workers' Youth Movement, which is strong here in Hanau. He took me with him once to one of their gatherings. And I am bound to say, Gerhard, that I liked the young men and women whom I met there. They dissociate themselves from this State as much as we do, and they want Socialism too. How does all that fit in? Must all these people be wiped out when we gain the victory? I feel quite at sea!'"

Gerhard Träger read these lines again. He perceived in them something that differed vastly from the defiant stolidity of the village lads who joined the Movement because of the mistaken agricultural policy of the government and because they liked playing at soldiers. Here was none of the obdurate truculence of petty bourgeois like Hungrich, who came to the Party to avenge themselves for the mean, repressed, routing lives they led. Here was pure faith and pure doubt, lacking any ulterior motive—the kind of thing for which many circles in the Party had only the word Liberalistic.

Gerhard Träger grew pensive. He was fond of Hanns. What should he say to him? The child wrote of justice. The great dilemma of the world confronted him. The officer knew well enough that the mass hatred that National-Socialism systematically inculcated was a fearful reef which one either passed with clenched teeth, closed eyes and complete suppression of personal feelings or not at all.

This was the great watershed between today and yesterday. The lad had hit on it with the infallible instinct of his years. It was necessary to save him.

"I have read and re-read your letter," he wrote. "Your dilemma is one which is not unknown to me. When I went to the war, my dear Hanns, I was younger than you. In those days it wasn't the Marxists and the Jews but the French and the English whom I had to shoot at. And I pondered about justice too. My father, a professor, had friends in France and in England, and excellent

people they were. But what difference did that make? What do individuals matter when the fate of nations is at stake? When I put on the field-grey and felt the splendid strength of the Fatherland all about me, all my scruples fell away. I no longer thought of justice then, Hanns. All that was over, and I was a soldier. That is what it is like today, Hanns. We are soldiers now too. The war is within the country. There is no peace, but a lost war. This is no State, but a ridiculous mutual insurance office. Let the individual be what he will, it is not his welfare but Germany's that is at stake. It was in the trenches that we learned to think like this. Germany's existence is at stake now as it was then—now more so than ever.

"One day the Realm will arise. We are its soldiers, and our only thoughts must be for Germany."

The officer read through what he had written. The lines struck him as a trifle pathetic. But all that mattered was to call the youth to order, to show him the way he should go.

"And so far as the Jews are concerned, I ask you to forget all those thoughts about justice. The Jews do not belong to us. Their blood is not our blood. And only blood binds. That is the great thought of our century, that is the thought that arose out of the trenches. Leave the Jews out of it. The great dream of Germany can only be dreamed without them. One human being is not like another. Do not forget that."

Gerhard Träger stopped. The gale howled outside. The lamp flickered.

"Perhaps, my dear Hanns, you will say that all these words do not help you. Perhaps you will say that they are only words and that your feelings are at the mercy of reality. But we shall be compensated later for all the feelings we beat down inside ourselves now. We are not playing now, Hanns, or picking flowers in a kindergarten. These are damnably serious times we are living in. Let your heart be cold; buckle on your shoulder-strap tighter. The only thing that matters is to free Germany, to make her great and strong. Do not look at the wreckage that must strew our path. The end is greater than the injustice that we must do."

Gerhard Träger considered what he had written. This letter must

not develop into a philippic. He had always felt it was a mistake actually to reprimand people, as so many leaders did. It was a mistake A. H. himself was not altogether free from. It inflamed people, and the Movement had had a little too much of that in the last few weeks. He carefully scratched the top of his head, as though to stroke the ponderous words away and make a little room for something lighter.

"But the best thing for you to do at the moment is to sit down and work hard for your matric. You have done a great deal for the cause already, and it is time you left school behind you. Send me a telegram as soon as you've got through, Hanns, and I'll fetch you at once in the car. Does that surprise you? Yes, the stormtroop has got a proper, full-size car now. The bodywork rattles a bit, but it goes. Wagner, the manufacturer, gave it to us. He must have thought it couldn't do any harm, and we couldn't possibly be worse than the Reds, so better be prepared in advance. We accepted it, of course, but laughed all the same. How he'll open his eyes when our Revolution comes! By the way, a Reichsbanner group has been formed in Erlenbach. Reichsjammer, Dr. K. called it. He is splendid at propaganda work. He still works secretly. He gives us marvellous tips, and the dope he keeps us supplied with about the big noises up at the town hall is simply splendid. You'll be surprised when you come back. The stormtroop is going to become a Standard this month. Our numbers are increasing splendidly. Most of the recruits are young peasants, but there are plenty of schoolboys as well. And there are actually six workers too. Jürgen Winkler brought them in. You remember him, it was he who made the disturbance at that play of Zuckmayer's and afterwards went to live with 'that woman,' as the bourgeois call her. 'That woman' has turned out to be a useful person. Jürgen has debates with Communists twice a week. 'That woman' introduced him to a Communist official, I believe he's the brother of her fiancé. They go round arguing in all the pubs, it's simply splendid. It often ends in a rough-house, but there are always enough of our people there. Hungrich devotes himself entirely to anti-Semitism nowadays. Being a steward at meetings is too

dangerous for him. He speaks only at middle-class meetings. People laugh at him, but something sticks all the same. For the time being we are holding small meetings among the peasants, and sometimes in places where there is a mixed population. The attack on the bourgeois won't begin till the main lines have been worked out at Munich. Kalahne was there recently, he's got a head for such things. I'm still a bit sceptical. People are still doing too well. In Siebenwasser things are particularly good. The workers are smiling right round to their ears. Schrader, gentle soul, has been officially appointed mayor. He's had an amazing piece of luck. Think of it, a few months ago, just about the time you went to Hanau, an American turned up. He turned out to be a native of the place, and he's rolling in money. He bought the Weissenfels estate, and he's arranged a loan for the city. He's been made a director of the slaughterhouse company and the theatre company, and the workmen are doing very well out of him. He's turned the whole estate inside out. I met the plutocrat once. Frau von Berg arranged a grand reception to which people of all shades of opinion were invited. They still always associate us with one shade. It was very funny to see how they all swarmed round the American. As a matter of fact he's not at all a bad fellow. He's a pleasant looking person, and he thinks clearly, but his whole existence is coloured by an unquenchable hatred for the Prussians. To think of such a thing still existing! I got into conversation with him, and of course everybody was very surprised to see him talking to me. Frau von Berg was nearly bursting with pride at such opposites being united in her house. Kalahne went about with an icy expression on his face, because the American can't stand him. Anyway, the American and I had a perfectly calm and ordinary conversation.

"And I must say, all honour to such cosmopolitanism. The man knows all there is to be known about the United States, but about Germany he knows nothing at all. He believes in our democracy. He said literally that now that the Prussians had been turned out Germany was meant for a great mission in the world. The great spiritual empire of the Germans was now beginning, he said, be-

cause they were the first people to overcome the nation in themselves, and by the power of their intellect they would restore the great unity of Europe, which they were prevented from achieving in the Thirty Years' War by the bitter hatred of other nations. I argued with the humanist for a long time. I told him that what was taken from us in the Thirty Years' War, namely the opportunity of welding ourselves into a nation, was precisely that which must be made up for now. This statement made him very angry. He said the Germans were going to misunderstand their destiny once more. The world could no longer stand being strait-jacketed into nations, and if we made matters worse than they were the world would succumb to the strain."

Gerhard Träger laid his pen aside. The wind was blowing fearfully through the space under the door. The officer poured himself out another glass of brandy. He drank it in short gulps. He could not help laughing at the thought of Bäuerle.

". . . and that, you see, my dear Hanns, is what the bourgeois world is like. Nothing but a lot of intellectual chitter-chatter. They do not know what they want, and consequently they do not know what they do. We are poorer than they. We do not think as cleverly as they. We do not know the world they talk about so magnificently. But we know our people. And that, when it comes to the point, is all that matters. That is the limit of our aspirations. After all, we are very modest. All we want is Germany. What do we care about the world? Does the world so much exist? I doubt it. And that is why I adhere so blindly to the Leader. It is he who exorcised the phantom of the outside world. It is he who held our noses to the soil and yelled in our ears: 'This is where you belong—you belong to Germany!' "

Gerhard Träger was breathing deeply. The words he had written excited him. He saw Hanns's ingenuous, boyish face before his eyes, he felt the boy's presence close beside him. It was necessary to save him.

"And it is for this reason that I tell you, as a fellow-member of the Party and your stormtroopleader, and as your friend and as a man who has done nothing else all his life but offer his skin for the

Germany of the future, as a man who gladly went to a Republican prison for striking down a traitor, and gladly renounced the possession of gold and came to live here in a peasant's cottage doing petty organizing work, and refused the flesh-pots of this State, it is for this reason, Hanns, that I tell you that all we need today is blind obedience. We were children, and then we became soldiers, and soldiers we have remained. There is no more private life for us. Your generation likewise goes straight from childhood to war. Do not brood over what we have lost. Obey! One man does the thinking for us. Our only duty when he summons us is to arise."

The officer pulled the rug more closely about him. The cottage was in the grip of a furious onslaught. Soot swirled round the kitchen. The trees groaned and creaked outside the window.

Gerhard Träger read the letter through. He was perfectly aware that what he had just written was an extraordinary medley of sentimentality and wrong-headedness. Now that he was alone was he to hide from himself that privately he thought the same as Hanns? Were not his words a drug he needed to calm himself? But what good did self-knowledge do? The thing to do was to stand erect. The thing to do was to organize the assault, compel the victory, strike down the foe, particularly the foe in one's own breast. One must not think of oneself. That damaged the common cause. Wax in our ears, our bodies tied to the mast, we sail down the years.

The officer went on sitting in the kitchen for a long time. He shivered with cold. The wind howled over the roof, lashed across the garden, eddied round the corner, angrily shook the windows, piped and whistled through the chinks, disturbed the cushions, roared down the chimney, clattered down the steps, thudded and thumped in the cellar.

Träger leapt to his feet. What was that? Träger had been in eighty-six battles. That was enough to ally him with the devil himself. But behind all the whistling of shells and the din of explosions, behind all the shrieking and all the confusion, there had been the still, small thought that a human agency was responsible

for it all. It made no real difference, yet it was extraordinarily reassuring. But this howling and clattering and battering was different. Ha! what was that? Was he afraid? How that door was shaking. There was another crash up on the roof. There it goes again, creeping down the passage, groping across the cellar. . . .

Träger sprang to his feet and flung open the door. The petrol lamp was in his hand.

"Is anyone there?" he shouted.

The lamp went out.

Gerhard Träger groped his way back to the kitchen, found a box of matches and lit the lamp again. A fearful trembling forced him to sit down. Ridiculous! he said to himself. Absurd!

But his ears remained on the alert. He distinctly heard footsteps down the passage. Somebody was there. Somebody was laughing.

Gerhard Träger seized his revolver. Of course, there it was again. It was creeping upstairs, groping along the wall. It was outside the door.

One, two . . . counted his heart.

A fearful crash broke the helpless stillness. Träger sprang to his feet, fired three shots at the door, then dashed out into the dark passage. A terrific gust of wind crashed against him. The outside door was open. He ran out into the garden. The storm howled all round him. Träger stopped still. There was nothing there. He listened tensely. He felt the warm barrel of his revolver. His fear left him. For a long time he went on standing among the flower beds. There was nothing there. Only the storm abated. The wind that came was gentle. Slowly it grew light behind him. The dawn hung dove-grey over the fields.

"What on earth . . . ?" said Träger.

He went back to the cottage. The fumes of the petrol lamp hung thickly about the passage. The kitchen still smelled of brandy. Suddenly everything was quiet.

The officer, revolver in hand, walked into the room and opened the shutters.

He heard the soft chiming of the village clock. The black fields lay in the early morning light and the air was filled with an insatiable mildness. And that was how spring began.

CHAPTER II

NOT for many years had the business people of Siebenwasser basked so contentedly in the sun. Small firms and workmen in particular once more felt the streets were paved with gold. The reconstruction of Weissenfels improved local trade enormously. Bäuerle had modern farm buildings built. He had borings made for an artesian well and completely renovated the manor house. A new dairy was built next to the stables, and on the right as you entered the farm there was a garage with a petrol pump. Behind it was an engine room and a workshop and in the hollow of the hill work was being done on the wine vaults.

By the end of April the workmen had finished. The cattle were in the stalls. The machines had been delivered and the re-building of the house was complete. Bäuerle forbade any celebrations when they moved in. But he could not prevent Fräulein Degerloch, the housekeeper, from decorating the passages and the porch with garlands nor the village teacher's little daughter from stammering out a poem on his arrival. After that Johann Kaspar went straight into the house and withdrew to his study with Henrici. His manager was a man after his own heart. He was quiet, matter-of-fact, thoughtful and moderate in his speech. He never talked of his private life. Bäuerle had engaged him on Schrader's recommendation, and all he had found out about him was that before the war he had farmed in Canada and that after the loss of his farm he had come to live with his brother in Siebenwasser and had been eking out a wretched existence as an insurance agent.

The two men made a round of the estate soon after lunch. A great deal still remained to be done. The fields were full of stones

and had not been manured for years. The vineyards had grown wild. Creepers choked the vines, rabbits had undermined the soil. Some of the meadows were waterlogged. Timber had been cut down indiscriminately by the peasants. All traces of cultivation had been destroyed. The fencing round the vegetable garden had collapsed, and the silver firs had been stolen. Of game there was no trace. It had all long since been shot or trapped by the peasants. "We must start right from the beginning," Henrici said, and Bäuerle nodded in assent.

They walked across the fields until evening. Henrici took samples of the soil, for the purpose of testing its fertility. Where they found the soil waterlogged they stuck a stick into the ground and tied a red cloth to it. They waded through the boggy land. It was May and there was warmth in the sun. The following week thirty-five labourers were put to work on the estate. They removed the stones, drained the fields, began the work of re-afforestation. Each morning Bäuerle got up shortly after sunrise and went with Henrici to the farm, where a large field was being drained, and tested the level of the water in the ditches. Then he went into the wood and directed operations there. They had old roots blasted and paths made through the undergrowth and food-troughs prepared for the animals which would be put to graze next month.

The work Bäuerle liked best was helping in the reclamation of the vines. Although havoc was widespread the majority of the roots had defied the general ruin. There was actually a prospect of obtaining a vintage this year if the fungi could be got under in time.

Johann Kaspar went to the Rhineland and bought new shoots. He planted them on the southern slope, where the hill was most open to the sun and the earth was streaked with slate. He called this vineyard "Irene." "Peace," Henrici said with a smile, and when Johann Kaspar, surprised at his manager's knowledge of Greek, asked him why he smiled and shook his head, Henrici said he did not believe in the word "peace."

Johann Kaspar stopped still among the vines, taken aback by Henrici's words. He stood like that for a long time, blinking in

the sunshine. Reddish shadows glimmered before his eyes. He could not get that casual remark out of his mind. But eventually he bent down, put his rake aside and started forming the earth into little heaps with his hands.

Johann Kaspar's reconstruction of his estate earned him panegyrics far beyond the limits of Siebenwasser. Stuttgart and Heidelberg newspapers sent reporters to interview him, but he refused to see any of them. He referred all the reporters to Henrici, and all Henrici gave them was some sober facts concerning the condition of the estate and a few sarcastic remarks about the government's agrarian policy, after which he politely showed them the door. The reporters would go back to Siebenwasser and listen to the workmen talking about the American in the inns. Here they found the stuff their readers wanted. Legends about Johann Kaspar had multiplied in Siebenwasser. Estimates concerning the amount of his fortune, whispered from mouth to mouth, had long exceeded the five million mark. The factories he possessed in Baltimore were said to occupy whole districts. The president of the New York banking house which had granted a loan to Siebenwasser had agreed on the spot, without flickering an eyelid, on receiving Bäuerle's cable. Bäuerle's daughter was descended on her mother's side from an old Spanish princely family, who owned vast territories in Mexico. During the war Johann Kaspar had languished in an internment camp because of his loyalty to Germany, but on the conclusion of peace the President of the United States had come to him and offered him his apologies in person. But Bäuerle had not been able to stand America after what had happened. He had come home with the intention of devoting his enormous fortune to the cause of German reconstruction, and it was actually rumoured that he intended to transfer his factories to Siebenwasser. He was a real German hero, a great German pioneer, an example for youth.

All this and similar stuff was hinted at in the newspapers and often barefacedly reproduced. Bäuerle smiled at it all. But one morning Irene laid before him on the breakfast table a newspaper

in which it was stated that his father, a Swabian by origin, had gone to America as a pioneer of German capacity, German breeding and German industry, and that he had died in New York, respected and prosperous, after nobly fulfilling his duty as a German. At that Johann Kaspar grew really angry and sat down and wrote a letter to the editor.

"Dear Sir," he wrote. "So far as I am concerned, you can make up anything about me that you like. That doesn't worry me in the least. But since you have chosen to lay your hands on my dead father and tried to make a patriot of him, I feel bound to inform you of the following. When my father died in the United States he was destitute. He left his native land because he could no longer stand the spirit which was making greater headway in it every day. He hated it more than the plague, and he was right, because we have seen that it cost more sacrifices than ten plagues. I returned to Germany in the belief that in the meantime that spirit had been exterminated. Yours, etc., J. K. Bäuerle."

When Irene thought of Baltimore the fearful experience of that night always rose before her eyes. The memory of it seemed to conceal all others—her childhood, her school, her life in her father's house, her travels, her friends, her afternoons playing tennis. That memory alone remained. Neither she nor her father ever mentioned the incident again. But it seemed to Irene as though that night on which she came home wet through was the one on which she really left her home. The shot she fired to protect herself from the young man's grasp had been more than her last attempt to save herself. She had left behind her more than the car's broken windshield. With that shot she also shattered the peace of her childhood years.

Everything changed for her from that day on. Not only did she leave home and come to live in this mysterious Germany, but her way of reacting to people and weighing their words and marking their silences altered too. Now, instead of feeling a cool astonishment or, at most, a feeling of alarm, there awoke in her a passionate joy or a torturing curiosity, an oppressive impatience

for the happenings of this world. Irene felt as though she were suddenly on the move and did not know where she was going. She could no longer devote herself to the day's work and wait for evening quietly and calmly as she had used. The trees she looked upon, the people she listened to, the wind that blew upon her, the sun, the rain, the night, all suddenly possessed a new sound, a different flavour, a closer breath.

Her father had altered too. When he came home from the factory in Baltimore he was always calm, cheerful and friendly. He never talked about his business, or discussed the world he moved in all day long. Now, however, she saw him at his work, participated in it herself. A strange land lay about her with all its riddles. New people pressed round her with questions, demands, wishes. She was responsible for everything that went on in the house. No hour passed without change. Things thrived on change.

Irene admired her father. How deep was the ardour with which he devoted himself to the reconstruction of the estate. He and Henrici would sit up together till late into the night. On the table before them there would be charts and magazines and samples of corn and various kinds of fruits and chemical powders and earths. Irene had never believed that winning human nourishment from the soil needed so much thought and so much effort. She listened in astonishment to their conversations. She listened to their calculations concerning the relative labour output of day-labourers, farm-hands and girls. She learnt all about the growth of corn, from the sowing to the harvest. She learnt about the remarkable process of combustion that went on in the soil. She learnt the secret of leaf-formation and nothing excited her more than the secret law of the seeds.

Henrici and Bäuerle were working out a plan. They spent a long time studying market conditions, and both came to the conclusion that it was impossible for the corn-growing peasants of Germany to survive unless the government took compulsory measures and ruthlessly stifled foreign competition. As this could not be done without catastrophic reactions on world markets, which

would in turn have unpredictable consequences for Germany as an exporting country, Henrici suggested to Bäuerle that he change his plans completely. He suggested turning Weissenfels into a fruit and vegetable farm. By intensive cultivation it would be possible to see the first return on the outlay in two years' time.

And so it came about that all the labour was suddenly turned in a new direction. Extensive asparagus fields sprung up. A big fruit plantation was made. The vineyards were extended. Raspberry sticks stretched in long high rows. Small forests of currant bushes sprang from the soil. An irrigation works was built. Vegetable gardens were planted behind the farm. Cucumbers, pumpkins, tomatoes, carrots, beans and lettuces stretched in broad expanses over to the wood.

Bäuerle doubled the number of cattle and extended the dairy. In the morning he was the first to wake up on the farm, and he woke his labourers himself. He glowed with health and ardour. The earth clung to his boots, but his feet never felt heavy.

Hanns Diefenbach passed his matriculation. He was spared the oral examination in spite of his wretched performance at mathematics. Those were exciting weeks. The examiners had hesitated long before deciding to admit Hanns to the examination. There were certain regulations in Prussian schools concerning pupils who changed their place of education which might have required Hanns to remain at Hanau for an extra term. But representations by Hanns's masters caused the matter to be satisfactorily settled. Hanns was popular in the school. The prepossessing youth was surrounded by a halo of martyrdom. True, nobody knew for certain exactly what had happened, but the silent distaste of the teaching staff for this State and the new Germany was sufficient to assure Hanns every possible support. The great majority of the teaching staff were monarchists, as was shown by the subjects they set for the matriculation essay: "The Conflict of the Princes of Homburg"; "Frederick the Great and the Categorical Imperative"; "The Storming of Langemark, or the Self-Martyrdom of a Generation."

Hanns chose the "Storming of Langemark." He was carried away as he described thousands of young men hurling themselves to certain death, fulfilling not only a military purpose but becoming a symbol for those who came after them; as he wrote of blind, implicit obedience elevated into the sphere of voluntary self-sacrifice, and the first blossoming forth of the faith in the future Realm of all the Germans, arising out of the bloodshed, amid the singing, all his scruples, all the thoughts that had tormented him, all doubts about the Leader and the Movement which had oppressed him since his stay in Hanau vanished in face of the mighty dead of Langemark. But one sentence in the boy's song of praise, one small, suddenly illuminating thought, held the form-master up when he came to read it.

". . . It is remarkable to note that the German people do not display their full moral grandeur except in the face of death. In spite of the unparalleled heroism of the past there is something unnatural in this. If only we knew how to live as well as we know how to die we would attain true moral greatness. This suggests the dangerous thought that the demon of self-sacrifice that has us in its grip is only the fearful opposite of not being able to organize our lives properly, according to the laws of reason and the common good."

Hanns Diefenbach sat over these sentences for half an hour. They had come from his pen-point of themselves, in complete contrast to what he had written before and what he proposed to write. He hesitated whether to leave them or not. For the first time he felt plainly inside him a strange power, hitherto unknown to him, a secret torturing doubt. For the first time he became aware that something within him was thinking against the current of his own thoughts. But at the same time he was conscious of the pleasure of thinking his own thoughts, the pleasure of protesting against the conventionally accepted, the intoxication of taking a first independent step. He did not cross out the sentences, but walked up to the desk and handed in his work, a little frightened, but borne up with the awareness of a special superiority.

During the next few days he forgot what he had written in the excitement of waiting. The feeling of having escaped the restrictive tentacles of school put such reflections completely out of his mind.

They did not occur to him again until he and his class-mates were all gathered one day at a small country inn on the Main. During the singing and the exchanging of cheerful banter his form-master came and sat by his side and reminded him gently of the sentences.

"Don't brood so much, Diefenbach," he said. "Up and at it! That's the slogan for today."

Those were the words with which Hanns said good-bye to his school. From Hanau he went to stay in a village where a former maid of his mother's had lived since her marriage. There, in the peace and simplicity of village life, he wanted to get what he proposed to do with his life quite clear in his own mind.

During the last few months his mother's letters had been shorter and cooler. A feeling of loving care no longer emerged from her hastily scribbled notes. At first Hanns had scarcely noticed the change. What with cramming for the exams, his exciting correspondence with Gerhard Träger and the doubts in his own mind about the absolute justice of the Leader's mission, his relations with his mother had slipped into the background. But in the solitude of his life in the village, and the lack of occupation which made him restless, he remembered his mother. He had written to her that he had passed his exams and asked her what he should do next.

She kept him waiting five days for an answer. And then, when the letter arrived, it consisted of a few lines scrawled in pencil.

Frau Diefenbach wrote that he must reconcile himself to the fact that he would not be going to a university. His stay in Hanau had run her so deeply into debt that it would take her a whole year to repay what she owed. He could come home if he liked, of course, but perhaps it would be better if he got himself a position as a pupil on an estate. A great alteration had taken place in her life, which would be difficult for Hanns to understand. It would be better if they did not see each other for a time. She

would explain it all to him later, and everything would be cleared up.

"Don't worry about me, my life is in good hands," she wrote. "Every day I work with Party Comrade Dern for our magnificent Movement and find my happiness in that. During the last few months scales seem to have fallen from my eyes. What fools we were to go to church for year after year when the man who will redeem us is alive! Heil Hitler! Your mother.

"P.S. I really think it better for you to go on staying in the village for some time yet. I'll send you money and some linen."

Half an hour after the receipt of this letter Hanns's mind was firmly made up to return to Siebenwasser at once. But while he was packing his trunk he collapsed in a faint. The peasant woman Berta, the former maid, laid him on the bed. She made him some tea and her husband fetched brandy from the inn. Hanns stayed in bed for a whole day and a night without talking. Then he got up and wrote a letter to Gerhard Träger.

Gerhard Träger arrived by car. They walked through the meadows. It was a fine day. The grass was fragrant and not a cloud was in the sky.

They reached the edge of the wood. The village lay in the hollow. Slender white smoke rose from the chimneys. The clock on the church tower struck one. Apart from that everything was still. Only the brief note of a jay sounded twice across the valley.

The officer rested his arm on the boy's shoulder.

"What I ask of you is unconditional discipline," he said.

"Would I have sent for you otherwise?" asked Hanns.

"Very well," said Gerhard Träger. "I have spoken to your mother. It is absolutely impossible for you to go home at present. A compromise would only do harm and make the atmosphere more poisoned than ever. You like straightforward solutions don't you?"

"First of all I want to know what's happened," Hanns said. "For heaven's sake tell me what it's all about," he said, shaking the officer's arm from his shoulder.

He looked at Gerhard Träger, a desperate expression in his eyes. With his two hands he seized hold of a broom-bush and sent the blossoms flying.

The officer stood motionless. His face was hard and serious.

"The facts by themselves are simple," he said, "but that helps us little. For weeks past your mother has been in a state of infatuation. If you like you can call it a state of lunacy, but it's a very worldly form of lunacy. She has just given herself in bondage to a man, and that man is our Party Comrade Dern."

He got up and went over towards Hanns.

"If she were just in love with the man it would not be so bad. One could put up with it, after all. But what has happened to her is far more serious than that. She has made a complete disavowal of her previous life. Your mother has remorselessly wiped out all memory of your father. She believes her real life began on the day she met Dern. She has given herself to him utterly, Hanns, and she rejects everything she remembers of her past life, including you."

Gerhard Träger stopped talking. The boy made no answer.

"How it all happened I was not able to find out in detail," the officer went on. "But there is one horrible piece of confirmation of the confusion into which your life is now thrown. We must try to get over it together. That is what I am here for, Hanns. I shall not desert you in this."

He looked at the boy in subdued excitement.

"You know the rôle Dern plays in the Party," he said. "He was one of the first who placed himself behind the Leader. That is a fact which cannot be altered. It is sufficient to protect him from any attack. Let us talk quite openly. I consider this Dern to be a human being consumed by hatred and megalomania. Party discipline forbids my saying so openly. If I say so now it is in violation of my own vows, Hanns, but I cannot do otherwise. I must stand by your side, if for no other reason than that this is not only a private matter but a Party matter as well. But more of that later. This man Dern must be understood. During the war he

was a warrant officer and had the misfortune to be stationed at a base-camp at which the officers were very snobbish. At every opportunity this post office official, who, to his misfortune, was allotted to a feudal regiment, was allowed to feel that he was not fully accepted. At the club-house he would sit at the foot of the table, with a paymaster. He told me himself how those fine gentlemen snubbed him. Unfortunately I know the beasts only too well. And when the Revolution broke out he saw them all scampering after one another to put on mufti. And then, when there was a shortage of men who stood firm, he seized his chance. He came to Munich by way of the Corps of Volunteers, and he really was one of the first to adhere to the Leader. He took part in rough-houses at meetings, his berserk courage soon made him feared everywhere, and he took part in the Hitler Putsch of November twenty-third. It is due to him alone that the Party recovered its strength so quickly in our region. He refused promotion, let himself be laughed at, but never gave in. The dreadful part of it is, Hanns, that he is a drinker, a vindictive, uneducated person, and a megalomaniac. But he has a dog-like devotion to the Leader. He would let himself be cut in pieces for him. There is another thing which makes him not only mad but unassailable. You know how he talks about the Jews. His is not the kind of anti-Semitism that we must foster. His is persecution mania, pure and simple. The sight of a Jew is sufficient to make him literally foam at the mouth. He calls the Jews a moral pestilence. He believes they systematically poison the race, and women in particular. He believes in Jewish ritual murders. For the last few weeks he has been preaching that the ignominy of November eighteen was nothing but a criminal assault on the German people by the Jews. Now all means are justified in a struggle for power—any and every means may be used, even the Jews as the limbs of Satan. That is effective with women. The Jewish nightmare appeals to the tremendous vague sense of terror inside them. In Dern's mind the Jews are quite literally what witches were three hundred years ago. When he speaks in the villages he reduces his audience to

raptures. The people simply fall for him. What happens has nothing whatever to do with politics at all. And that is exactly what happened to your mother."

The officer stopped talking. He was trembling with excitement. He turned his back to Hanns.

"About the man's private life I will say nothing. He is a pig. They know that in Munich perfectly well. But they also know his influence on certain classes of people. They are not squeamish in Munich. We need the masses, even if a pig hypnotizes them. Hanns, I should never have told you anything about Dern had he not infringed upon your life. Our Leader has adherents of all kinds, and he alone knows what is necessary for the cause. We have only to obey. Listen, Hanns, this is what I wanted to say to you. You must look beyond your private destiny to the Leader. You must not be led astray, even if a Dern enslaves your mother, even if your mother tears everything out of her own heart—your father and yourself . . . Hanns, Hanns," the officer shouted, "you must never go astray. Never, Hanns, never!"

He had gone over to the boy and was holding him by the shoulders. Hanns looked up at him.

"Does he beat my mother, as he beat the other women?" Hanns asked.

"I do not know. She is like wax in his hands," Gerhard Träger answered.

"Does she ever talk about my father?"

"Yes," stammered Gerhard Träger.

"What does she say about him?"

"I do not know exactly."

"I want to know what she says about my father."

Hanns had seized the officer by the arm. His face was white, his eyes were starting from their sockets.

"Tell me the truth!" he shouted. "Tell me the truth! You must tell me the truth!"

"It is not the truth," Gerhard Träger answered. "What she says is not the truth. What she says is a fearful perversion of the truth. It is a lie! It is an infamous way of ridding herself inwardly

of you. Dern suggested it to her. She says there is Jewish blood in your father's family, and nothing but your death for the Movement could wipe out the shame—"

With a loud cry Hanns tore himself free and started down the slope. He dashed madly through the fields, the officer running after him, holding a piece of paper in his hand.

"It's not true!" the officer shouted after him. "It's not true! . . . I've been to . . . the Race Office. Hanns!" But the boy was not listening. He ran on and on. He fell and got up again. He ran in the direction of the mill.

The officer saw the weir. He coolly measured with his eye the distance between himself and the fugitive. He jumped over a hedge and fell on landing on the other side. He reached the road and quickly let himself down over the parapet of the bridge. The water came up to his waist. He climbed up the bank and seized the boy, who furiously bit his finger. They wrestled in panting silence. In the end Träger raised his fist and knocked the boy down.

The officer sat next to the boy for a long time, holding his head, removing the pieces of hay from his hair. But he dared not wipe away his tears.

CHAPTER III

SUMMER had come. It was a burning hot July day. No rain had fallen for weeks. Fissures appeared in the dry and dusty soil.

Irene was in an attic room in the manager's house. The window was open. The room was hot and stuffy. The water-sprayers were revolving unintermittently down below in the garden. Irene could see Henrici making his way among the vegetable beds the other side of the wall. Swarms of women and children were carrying water in pails from water-carts to the beds. Irene had aired the bed and put fresh linen on it. The room had been scrubbed out, the cupboard aired and fresh sheets of paper had been laid in the drawers.

Irene hurried. Frau von Berg would be coming in a few minutes. They were going to see the festival play at Heidelberg, and she had to get the room ready for the young pupil first. Her father had engaged him a fortnight ago, before leaving for Holland, where he had gone to study agriculture. Irene smoothed out the pillow. She tidied the things on the washstand. The room looked very bare. A bed, a table, a chair and a cupboard, that was all.

Irene decided to get some flowers to make it look a little more cheerful. She went out of the room and cut a bunch of flowers from the sweet-pea trellis in the garden.

Oh, dear, there was Frau von Berg's little motor-car coming in through the farm. Irene recognized the high note of its horn. It was almost like a shriek.

"Angelika!" Irene called out. She dashed over to the car, holding the bunch of flowers in her hand.

"Not ready yet, of course," said Frau von Berg, with a laugh. "We're due to have tea with the producer at six o'clock and you're still playing the peasant girl!"

They went up the steps together.

"Your sweet peas are marvellous," Frau von Berg remarked.

"I planted them myself," said Irene, smiling. "I like them because they're so gay."

She put the flowers down on the table in the hall and they went upstairs into her room.

Frau von Berg sat down on the bed. Irene undressed, pulled her bathing cap over her head, went into the bathroom next door and had a shower. Frau von Berg talked to her through the open door.

"You can congratulate me, Irene. I finished with Bringolf for good yesterday."

"Bravo!" Irene called out from the bathroom.

"The man actually wept, but I'm tired of his nonsense. One should keep one's fingers off handsome men. They're so dull!"

Frau von Berg, bored, picked up a book lying on the table. *Splendeurs et Misères des Courtisanes* she read in gold letters on the cover.

She asked the girl how she liked the book. "Marvellous, isn't it?" she said, and before the girl had time to answer, she added:

"Those were passions, weren't they? The men of today ought to have their ears boxed with the book!"

"I don't like it a bit," Irene called out from under the shower. "I think that to give oneself as completely as all that isn't love at all. I think it's absolutely crazy. And to die simply because a young man goes to the dogs, because of money and other women, is unhealthy, Angelika. It's pathological!"

Irene shook herself. Hundreds of pearly drops of water sprayed from her bronzed skin. She stood naked in the bright room.

"I could never do a thing like that," said Irene, with a laugh,

wrapping the bath gown round her. "I could never die for the sake of a man!"

The two women walked down the cool corridor. Fräulein Degerloch was standing in the hall, beckoning mysteriously.

"What's the matter?" Irene asked. Fräulein Degerloch came rushing up the stairs towards them with an arch expression on her face.

"The pupil has arrived," she whispered.

"Is that all?" said Irene with a laugh, walking firmly down the stairs.

"Hurry up," said Frau von Berg. "I'll fill up in the meantime."

Irene went into the hall, but there was no-one to be seen. There was no-one in the gun-room either.

Irene went back to the cloak-room, where the housekeeper was busy cleaning the stair rods.

"I can't find him," she said. "Where have you hidden that pupil of yours?"

"He's in the kitchen," Fräulein Degerloch whispered. "His boots were too dirty."

Irene clattered down the metal staircase to the basement. A warm smell of cooking came up to meet her.

"This is the young gentleman," said Fräulein Degerloch, opening the door.

Hanns was sitting in the bright, tiled room, a grey canvas rucksack at his feet. He rose and walked a few paces forwards, then stopped dead.

"Fräulein Degerloch," Irene called out. "Show the young gentleman up to his room. It's all ready for him."

She ran up the spiral staircase again and back to the hall. No, no, it can't be, it's impossible. Her eyes fell on the blue and red sweet peas lying on the table.

Irene picked them up and dashed through the west wing exit and all the way to the manager's house.

"Hallo!" Frau von Berg called out from the petrol pump, but Irene didn't hear her. She rushed upstairs, pulling her skirt up to her knees.

Good God, she said to herself. Have I gone mad? But by this time she had flung open the door, picked up the vase on the commode and put the flowers in it.

Frau von Berg's horn sounded from down below. Irene dashed down to the car and flung herself back on the cushions.

"What's the matter?" asked Frau von Berg.

"Drive away!" cried Irene.

Johann Kaspar drove to Amsterdam and back all by himself. He returned in a particularly good mood. His three weeks in Holland had been a most enjoyable experience. He drove back to Siebenwasser full of new knowledge and new plans.

"Agriculture is peace," he said to Schrader. "You can't imagine what could be done with our country if we had a hundred years of peace."

The mayor nodded his head. "A hundred years of peace," he said. "What a dream for us Germans!"

He described his new housing scheme to Bäuerle. What he proposed was no less than the demolition of the musty, mouldering old houses that lay in the shadow of the old walls. Workmen and poorer clerks lived in them. The narrow rooms were overcrowded. The sun never shone into their courtyards. The basements reeked of damp.

Schrader wanted to have the whole romantic old district pulled down. He wanted to have the walls razed and the whole quarter, all the way to the bastion, turned into recreation grounds. The displaced families would be shifted to a modern housing site down in the valley.

This had been an old plan of the mayor's, and the loan from the American bank had brought it within the bounds of possibility for the first time. His first step was to make sure of the council's assent. Then he went to Frankfurt and entrusted the task of preparing some models to an architect of the school of Councillor May. At the end of July the models were exhibited in the town hall. A New Siebenwasser Society was founded under Schrader's patronage, and Kalahne became its secretary.

When the workmen saw the models of the new homes pre-

pared for them they shook their heads. The models were of huge, white, square-shaped blocks of flats, with flat roofs and windows running all the way along. There were no gables and no oriel windows; and not so much as a weather-vane was to be seen.

But they swallowed their doubts when they learned the amount of orders that the city intended to give. The scheme was planned to be begun this summer, and the first block was to be completed during the winter.

Then the first opposition arose. It came from the Society of the Friends of Siebenwasser, the chairman of which was Father Allwohn, the principal. The city council were informed in a ferocious letter of protest that the destruction of the worthy old houses by the wall would be a smack in the face for all who loved their native city. At the council meeting a week later Herr Dern denounced the authorities for erecting in Siebenwasser a specimen of nigger art. No German could reconcile his racial dignity with living under a flat roof. Living under a flat roof smacked of Jewish equalitarianism. He condemned the architectural scheme as Marxistic—building glass boxes for sub-men.

Schrader quietly replied that the flats were planned to provide light, sun, cleanliness and labour-saving devices at a reasonable price. If this were African he would be glad to be a Negro, and if he could only preserve his racial dignity by living under a gabled roof which was being consumed by dry rot he would gladly renounce his racial feelings. Nevertheless, Dern persisted. He summoned a meeting. "The flat roof is a blot on German civilization," was his battle-cry. The meeting was crowded. Opposition grew.

The scheme needed the sanction of the city council. The Centre and the Social-Democrats had ranged themselves behind Schrader, but they would not be assured of a majority without the support of the Economic Party, the leader of which was Stählin, the master-baker.

Hanns went up to his room early. Henrici had taken him quickly round the stables and the dairy and shown him the artesian well, and had left him with the injunction to come and see him again

early next morning. Hanns lay on his bed a long time, trying to go to sleep. But as soon as his thoughts grew dim and sleep approached the thought of Irene would promptly re-awaken him.

He had come to work on the farm with a quiet mind and a sense of calm determination. After the crisis in the Odenwald he had lived for many weeks at Gerhard Träger's cottage, and the effects of the blow he had suffered gradually faded away under the officer's care. His mother's renunciation of him, Dern's wicked suspicions, the attack on his father's honour plunged him, after the first outburst, into a silent torpor. Days of sharp self-probing followed, days of acute awareness of the completeness of the severance of the ties that bound him to his childhood. Nevertheless, in the hours of darkness when he lay awake with the officer's quiet breath rising and falling beside him, at times when anger at the insult to his father's memory flared up fiercely within him, in his grievous perplexity in the face of human capacity to be mean and evil, there would arise in him the thought that it was unseemly to collapse beneath the burden of a private fate. The thought would descend upon him with a blessed intensity. In these times into which he had been born higher things were at stake than personal circumstances and personal happiness. To look at the world from the viewpoint of the individual, to measure all colourings and stimuli only by their reflection on one's own skin, as previous generations had done, was wrong. It was necessary to emerge from this cage, cast off the strait-jacket of the individual, and judge the individual from the general, the personal from the common point of view. What was this larger point of view? It was that of his people, to whom he belonged by speech and blood. Before his people, before his people's law, before his people's wretchedness, his people's destiny, private life melted away into a shabby little trickle. What was his suffering compared to the *via dolorosa* his people had trodden for hundreds of years? What did the loss of his childhood matter in comparison with the immeasurable sacrifices his people had already made for the sake of their dream of the future Realm? That unhappy dream which, arisen anew from the trenches and overshadowing all else, once more had youth

under its intoxicating spell? Night after night Hanns sat up with the officer, poring over maps. Out of the vortex of European countries they cut the living body of the German nation. Ninety million hearts beat in that body, which lay bound and fettered among the states, bled to death by the sick dreams of the Holy Roman Empire, struck down by the pestilence of the Thirty Years' War.

The officer's words were brief and matter-of-fact. He described the powerful uprising of the yearning for the Holy Realm that took place in the pre-war Youth Movement; he told how it became intensified in the trenches, the open graves of Flanders; and how, after the defeat and the betrayal, the catastrophe and the dishonour, it rose to a flame, in face of which all private whims and wishes faded into insignificance. The Realm, the commonwealth of all the Germans, the great temple that stretched from the southern foot of the Alps to the North Sea, represented the fulfilling of a thousand-year-old dream. That dream of ultimate magnificence burned in the officer's eyes, hardened the iron pallor of his cheeks. He inspired the boy with the power of a super-personal message. Hanns would sit poring over books till early morning. With the officer he read the sermons of Master Eckehart, he read Fichte, Lagarde, Möller van den Bruck, and the Leader's speeches. He glowed in the knowledge that the task of building the coming Realm, clearing away the crazy trash of history, releasing Germany from thraldom to an alien inner enemy had been allotted to his generation. The boy's faith was genuine. It saved his soul from the abyss. He took refuge in the myth that has twined like a thread through a thousand years of German history, a tender, youthful melody, always keeping time with death, from the search for the Holy Grail to the day of Langemark.

The officer nourished the boy's dreams. Those had been enchanted days. The two toured the villages together, organizing the stormtroops. Together with Jürgen Winkler, they sketched out a plan of action for the following winter. The officer, sober and matter-of-fact in his work, gave way to enthusiasm in the hours when he was alone with Hanns. They would often

walk in the departing blue of evening as far as the clearing among the pines, from which there was a view right over the countryside to the distant, hazy plain. When they talked of Germany, of the future Realm of truth, virtue and honour, from which the stains of thousands of unhappy years would have to be cleared away, wiped out, obliterated from memory, they spoke with an untainted faith. But with the ecstasy still in their eyes, a note of fearful hatred would creep into their voices when they thought of their opponents. Those were no opponents; reptiles, rather. Liberalism stood for Mammon whom Siegfried fought: France stood for the dragon whom Siegfried fought. Alb and Troll whom Siegfried fought were represented by Marxism, the kingdom of the underworld, of darkness, of the crippled and defeated, envious souls.

Those evenings of dreamed-of good but real hate gradually removed all Hanns's doubts. He had attained enlightenment, or so he believed, and in him glowed a sacred light. Germany was everything, without Germany he was nothing.

The officer, moved by this outburst of faith, did not forget the practical side. He continually reminded Hanns that it was only by constant piecemeal work and iron discipline and complete subjection to the Leader's will that their mighty task would succeed. He did not disguise the fact that the peasants thought more of repealing taxes than of their thousand-year-old Realm; nor did he blink the fact that large sections of vengeance-seeking bourgeoisie had filtered into the Movement, and that the battle-line of honour and virtue often concealed the business man's wish to be rid of an inconvenient tariff. Hanns was no fool. And he was no longer eighteen years old. It was quite clear that all the generations born between 1880 and 1902 must be done away with. They must be used up in the battle. Their instincts did not fit in with the new times. At most they must be put up with only until the seizure of power. And power must be fought for with every possible means —craft and treachery and every poison within reach. For without the power the Realm would remain a dream. Without the power it was but a hollow and futile fantasy. But with the power it

was a dream that no one could keep from coming true. And it would come true. The youth of this generation would bring it down from the skies upon an earth that was weary after its age-long struggles. They would march singing into the new Realm while the old was still licking their wounds. Freed from Pauline poison, rejoicing in their earthliness, an inexhaustible yes upon their lips, joyful in their strength, terrible to the weak, knowing not the trammels of a morality based on human suffering, unpoisoned by the wounds of the Jew on the cross, they would march into their own . . . Hellas in Germany in fact.

This was the light in which Träger looked upon Hanns. This was the light in which he looked upon them all—all those lads like Hanns. A spring storm over the degenerate land.

At the end of June Gerhard Träger had been summoned to Munich. When he came back his face was wreathed in smiles. "I've been put in charge of the whole of Westphalia," he announced. But when he saw how pale Hanns went he withheld his joy. "I shan't go away before knowing what happens to you," he said. But Hanns went on walking beside him anxiously. "It's not that," he had said. "It's only that you won't be there any more." The same evening Jürgen Winkler, Hungrich and Dern came to the cottage. When Hanns saw Dern he felt no hatred and no pain. For him Dern was nothing but a fellow-member of the Party, a soldier of the future Germany, like him. Only Gerhard was outside this calm—Gerhard, his mentor, the guardian of his path, his father and his mother and more.

The leadership of the S.A. was given to Hungrich. The officer handed it to him without any pleasure. He knew the bitter hatred that consumed this half-educated surveyor. He knew that if Hungrich shouted "Germany, awake!" a hundred times he was really thinking only of himself. But Hungrich had been one of the earliest members of the Party, and Dern backed him. The officer insisted on Jürgen's being given command of the Siebenwasser stormtroop and laid it down that no one should interfere with him in his campaign among the workers and his discussions with them. The transfer lasted three days.

Then Kalahne came, and he and the officer sat together a long time. They talked of Dern and Hungrich and of the meetings to be held next winter. They discussed when Kalahne should come out into the open. Dr. Kalahne set the summer of the following year as the limit. "Great convulsions are ahead of us," he said. "The ice is cracking. The whole house of cards is perceptibly tottering. And when it does we'll go all out for the masses. And I'll be there to see!"

Two days later he came again, and brought with him the information that he had got Hanns the position on the estate. Frau von Berg had been to see the extraordinary American about it, and he had given his consent without so much as seeing the boy. That was how that problem was settled.

Then there was the parting and the officer had gone. He had walked along the platform, with Hanns beside him, carrying his bag, and he sat behind the window and Hanns stood silent in front of it, and the officer read his paper. And as the brakes were released and the carriage slowly started moving, the officer, serious and kindly, looked up once more, and the boy had bitten back his tears.

Hanns jumped out of bed. The room was filled by the thin, creeping light of the moon. He walked over to the window. It was the depth of night. The roof of the stables glittered in the moonlight. The youth breathed deeply. It had come again, this feeling of unrest, this gnawing murmur under his heart, this worm of fear. What had happened? Was it the girl? What did he care about her? He cared about Germany and not about the girl. Had she recognized him? How she had run away. She had looked at him for a fraction of a second, and that look had remained in spite of her quick feet. Hanns went over to his trunk. A little box was in the left corner of it. It had belonged to his father. His mother had sent it to him with his laundry. You could only open the box if you knew the key-word, and the key-word was Plato. How had he hit upon that? That word followed him about everywhere. The cover of the box opened and Hanns took out the letters. The note-

paper was simple paper, the small-size paper on which Gerhard always wrote. The handwriting was plain and without flourish. There were eight letters altogether. All belonged to the Hanau period, except one which had come today. Fräulein Degerloch had put it next to his plate at supper-time. "It's from Münster," she said. She had an aunt in an institution there.

Hanns, naked from the waist up, knelt in front of his trunk, holding the letter up in the gentle light. The writing stood out distinctly on the yellow paper. The words spread before his eyes like thin veins. He went softly over towards the window. He leaned over the window sill and his shadow fell sharply on the roof below.

". . . I take advantage of a few spare minutes to write to you. This is a difficult region to work in. The power of the priests here is uncanny. They are glued in the people's souls. But more of that another time. All I want to say to you today is this: take no more heed of the Christian God of your youth. It struck me on the way here that this might conceivably be a stumbling-block for you, and I would not be there to help. Well, that God perished at Verdun. Understand it well, all His commandments were shot to pieces there. It was always to the individual that He made His appeal, and He died in the trenches. He perished utterly, I tell you. But a new religion arose from the trenches, from the horror that humanity had to bear, from the ashes of false equalitarian morality, from the annihilation of personal things. This religion was a sacred faith in the race, in the commonwealth of the German people. That is what we serve. Let the dead bury their dead gods."

The letter broke off. "I must go," was written at the end of it. But scribbled at the side of the page, as if in jest, were the words: "See that you don't smell of girls when I come back!" Hanns held the sheets of paper in his hand, and went on sitting for a long time, almost without thinking. The night air cooled him. He lifted his feet on to a chair and put his arms round his knees.

Hanns reported to Henrici punctually at five o'clock. It was a morning of steely blue freshness. A clattering of pails came from

the well, where the men were fetching water for the animals. The stables in which the animals had been awakened exuded a musty odour. Snow-white smoke ascended from the chimneys. Henrici was sitting at a long, wooden table next to the stable. Women were pouring coffee into the cups from broad, round jugs. In the middle of the table there was a plateful of bread. "Help yourself," said Henrici, dipping his knife into a basin full of dripping. Hanns helped himself. The hot coffee drove the cold from his limbs. The bread was coarse and firm. "Do you like it?" Henrici asked. Hanns nodded. Horses were being harnessed to the carts and men were pushing the mowing machines out of the shed. Women and girls started clearing the tin plates from the table. Suddenly the high-pitched note of a motor-horn made itself heard above the stamping of the beasts, the noise of the tools and the laughing and cursing of the men, and a car drove in through the open gate and stopped a few yards away from the table. Henrici sprang to his feet and went over to the car, but before he had time to open his mouth the door of the manor house was flung wide open and Fräulein Degerloch came dashing down the steps with flying apron and bobbing cap. Her screeching voice caused the pigeons on the stables to fly away, and the animals attached to the carts grew quite restive.

"Irene, Fräulein Irene," she shrieked, stretching out her arms as though about to take wing. Meanwhile the girl had got out of the car. She let the housekeeper fling her arms about her. Frau von Berg was beside her, smiling.

"What on earth is the matter with you?" she said, plucking Fräulein Degerloch by the arm. A sob was the only answer.

"Come on, get on with it!" Henrici called out and the inquisitive swarm of girls started getting into the carts. The teams of horses reached the gate and the horseshoes gripped the dew-wet yellowy clay soil. Over the wood the sun broke through the haze of morning and bright, splendid light came flooding down on the farm. The grass and the shrubs in the garden and the serrated leaves of the plane-trees next to the gate and the bright white façade of the house glinted in the sunshine. The first sounds of human labour were heard in the hills and the fields and the meadows, the vine-

yards and the woods. And the housekeeper raised her tear-stained face and said, laughing painfully and stroking the girl's hair:

"I was so anxious about you. Where have you been all night?"

"I was having a midsummer night's dream," was all Hanns overheard before the manager came up.

"What are you staring at?" he said. "Come along!"

Hanns remained till midday in the tomato fields, where a swarm of women and day-labourers were working. They picked the tomatoes, put them in big baskets and loaded them on a cart. Hanns, with one of the farm-hands, drove the cart back to the farm, where the baskets were weighed and numbered. Hanns entered the weights in a little book and then dawdled back with the nag to the fields. A show like that can't last till five o'clock in the morning, was the thought that hammered in his head as the cart jolted along the furrows and the farm-hand dozed off sleepily in the heat. It's impossible for it to have lasted all that time, he said to himself. He forced himself to start a conversation with the farm-hand. But even he started talking about Irene right away. "That Frau von Berg is a lively one," he said. "She falls like a ripe plum. The young lady ought to look out. That's no company for a young girl."

"What's that got to do with me?" said Hanns with a laugh. He laughed so loud and long that the farm-hand asked him what there was that was so funny.

A few minutes before twelve o'clock Hanns met the manager in the cow-sheds. He was with a man in a white overall, whom Hanns recognized as Brettl, the veterinary surgeon, an old member of the Party. Hanns raised his right arm in salute, but Brettl was busy with a cow and didn't look at him. As the two men left the cow-shed Brettl said to Henrici: "It will probably be in three days' time." Then he got into his little Opel two-seater and drove away without taking any notice of Hanns. Henrici took Hanns's little book and cast his eye down the entries.

"That's quite all right," he said. "But tell me, young man, what did you raise your arm like that for when you saw the vet? You must give up that sort of monkey-trick as long as you're here," he added in biting tones. "While you're here you're among serious,

grown-up people. And now go and wash yourself. Fräulein Irene expects us for lunch in ten minutes' time."

The table was laid in the hall. When Hanns walked in Irene and the manager were already seated. Hanns bowed. Irene looked at him. Her eyes were calm and indifferent. "I think we have already met," she said, offering him her hand. "That is your seat." She pointed to the chair opposite her. Hanns sat down. Cold vegetable soup was served.

"And so after the theatre everybody went to the Heidelberger Hof?" Henrici said.

"Yes," said Irene. "It was wonderful to dance in the open air after that thrilling play. And there were such a lot of people I didn't know. Pity, I've forgotten their names. Frau von Berg knows such a lot of people—journalists and theatrical people, you know. At first I felt frightfully stupid among all those brilliant people, but afterwards, when we started dancing, I felt perfectly happy."

"Poor Fräulein Degerloch," said the manager, smiling. "She woke me up three times during the night and asked me whether we ought not to call up the police."

"Oh, dear," said Irene. "I meant to be home by twelve o'clock, but they all insisted on my staying and said they had never heard of such a thing. As a matter of fact, afterwards I was glad I stayed. Frau von Berg introduced me to a young writer. He writes novels and short stories, and everybody says he's got a great future before him. And just think of it, Henrici, he sat with me on the terrace until daylight came, telling me all about the war here in Europe. The things he told me were terrible. He told me about how children grew up fatherless, and how there was no law and order, particularly in the moral sphere. And he told me how death stalked abroad among the people, and how people thought of nothing but how to remain alive. The whole thing seemed so ghastly, so appalling, so senseless that I couldn't stop asking him questions. And what do you think he actually said, when I asked him what must be done to prevent such a thing from ever happening again? Why, sitting there on that beautiful terrace, he told me that the only thing to save the world was Communism! I was quite startled, and asked

him how on earth he could say a dreadful thing like that, and he said there could be no peace between the peoples until there was a new order throughout the world. He wasn't in the least abusive, but spoke very politely, as though he were merely dealing with scientific facts. He will be coming here. Frau von Berg invited him."

Hanns sat over his plate in silence. He had made up his mind not to take in a single word. What had it got to do with him? But he understood every word only too well. And now he felt Henrici's glance upon him and heard him say:

"What fine acquaintances you make, Fräulein Irene. So he's a Communist, is he, and thinks the world can't go on like this and that if things are left as they are everything will go phut? That was a dangerous midsummer night's dream of yours, I must say. And he's coming here, is he? He'll have to be very careful. It's very dangerous up here."

Irene burst out laughing.

"What on earth do you mean?" she said.

"Our young friend here would immediately dash to the armoury and shoot the sub-man dead," said Henrici. "Crash! Bang! and that would be the end of him."

Hanns looked up. Henrici was grinning in his face. Irene was looking at him mockingly. Hanns wanted to get up and run away. The manager's provocation was only too plain. But he restrained himself, in order not to appear cowardly. He forced himself to answer, quite calmly.

"Herr Henrici is joking."

"Herr Henrici is not joking!"

The man had suddenly flared up and all trace of laughter had disappeared from his face.

"Or do you perhaps deny that you denounce all Communists as sub-men and do them in whenever you can?"

"Whatever is the matter with you, Herr Henrici?" Irene asked.

"And do you deny that that vegetarian of yours in Munich, that cannibal in disguise, is only waiting for the day to swing his axe? And do you deny that when Jewish blood gushes forth from the

knife and Communists' brains are spattered on the wall things will be better than ever?"

Hanns sprang to his feet. There was a hammering in his head. He bit his tongue. Keep calm! he said to himself. Keep calm!

"But what's the matter? I don't understand," said Irene, sitting erect on her chair, her eyes seeking in vain for a refuge.

"So you're tongue-tied now, are you, you savage?" Henrici said. His face was flushed and he, too, was standing, facing Hanns.

"Come, be honest about it!"

The room was going round and round before Hanns's eyes. Eventually his self-control returned.

"By your behaviour you force me to an explanation which has nothing whatever to do with my stay here, which in any case I regard as ended from this moment. Be good enough to listen to me," he said.

Hanns drew a deep breath and went on:

"A person who acknowledges Communism is for us beyond the law. Yes! He who tramples on his Fatherland, boasts that he has no Fatherland, has judged himself. He is dead before he dies."

He said these words with all the calmness of which he was capable. But the manager started shouting at him once more:

"The Fatherland!" he roared. "To whom does the Fatherland belong?"

"To the Germans," Hanns answered, quietly, without hesitation.

At that the manager burst out laughing. It was a hard, pealing laughter.

"Oh! you child!" he said. "You prodigy!"

And he drummed on the table with his fists.

Irene rose to her feet. She walked over to Hanns and said softly:

"Please calm yourself."

And then, turning to Henrici, she said:

"Why are you so horrid to him?"

The manager sat down. He wiped his brow with his pocket handkerchief.

"I don't know," he said. "But whenever I see one of these lads I see red."

He emptied his wine-glass at a gulp. Irene stood silently in front of Hanns. The work-bell rung outside. Fräulein Degerloch came from the kitchen with a jug of fragrant coffee.

"There!" she said smilingly, putting the jug down on the table. "And now for the best five minutes of all!" And then, as nobody said anything, she planted her soft, reddish arms firmly upon her softly upholstered hips and said to Hanns:

"Young man!" she said. "From the face you're making you look as if you would like to poison the whole Palatinate!"

Hanns went up to his room and started packing his trunk at once. It seemed obvious that he could not remain on the estate another day. This Henrici was an evil provoker, and Irene allowed herself to be imposed upon by a writer who actually boasted of being a Communist. Of course, that was something out of the way. But to fight for Germany, to think of Germany only, was vulgar. To wipe out the ignominy of this shameful peace, if necessary with blood, and then build the new Realm wasn't fashionable. But Moscow was fashionable. Making one's flesh creep with thoughts of Communism was more stimulating than deep, devoted love of one's country and one's people. Hanns flung his linen into his trunk in a furious temper. He tore the sweet peas from the vase and flung them out the window. The only thing to do was to clear out at once. The only question was where to go. He counted his money. He had eighteen marks. Should he go to Jürgen or to Kalahne or to his mother? He sat down. If only I were out of it already, he said to himself.

He heard his name being called out down below and went to the window. Henrici was standing outside in the sunhsine. "None of your nonsense," he called out. "Come downstairs!" Hanns closed the window with a bang. "Very well, I'll come up, then," Henrici said, and a moment later his footsteps came plodding up the narrow staircase.

Hanns slammed his trunk to and stood with his back to the door. Henrici came into the room.

"I see—packing your things already," Henrici said. "Running

away like a young lady whom a gentleman's been making insulting advances to! Pluck, I call that!"

He went up to Hanns and put his hand on his shoulder.

"Listen, you young, German man!" he said. "Don't you do anything stupid." Henrici struck his gaiters with a switch he had in his hand. He started walking up and down the room.

"Listen," he said. "I know all about you. Do you think I'd allow myself to be saddled with a pupil without knowing anything about him? Don't take the whole thing so seriously, d'you understand? I hardly slept all night because of that silly old Degerloch goose. She kept knocking at my door and howling and lamenting about Fräulein Irene. So after a bit I started taking swills of cherry brandy. After half an hour of that you can't hear even a hysterical woman. That's human, after all, isn't it? You young savage!"

He stopped still in front of Hanns and tried to move him.

"I can't help it if I get excited every time I see anyone raising an arm like that. Usually I swallow it down, but today it just burst out. Anyway, just to let you know, I easily flare up when I hear anything about that vegetarian saviour in Munich or anything that savours of that quarter—gently, gently, young man, not so quick with your fists. I want to make peace with you. So far as I'm concerned you can believe in anything you like. You can believe in all the brown savages for all I care. But keep that arm of yours down when you see the vet. I don't dash about the farm shouting 'Heil Moscow!' every time I see an ox-tail, although that seems to me to be a far more reasonable sound to make—at least there's something one's mind can fasten on to. But whether I like the Five-Year Plan better than your savagery or not has got nothing whatever to do with you. I've knocked about the world and I know the misery of it. Heil India! Heil Canada! and all the rest of it doesn't achieve anything, my dear chap. All this patriotism won't alter anything. It makes a lot of noise in the streets and then it's over and then everybody's left staring at one another and wondering what it was all about."

Henrici took hold of Hanns and forced him into a chair.

"Now just sit down quietly, and let a sub-man have a bit of a say

for once. Very well, then. Father dead, mother lost, friend gone. Is that right? Very good. What next? Run away? Into the Fatherland? That has cost many people their lives. And the boy's got to live. He's good-looking too. So there's twice as much reason why he should live. Is that what he wants? Or is that too materialistic, too sub-human for him? Eh? Very well, if that's what he wants, he stays here. And he leaves his hand politely in his pocket, goes quietly about his work, and the wicked Henrici leaves him and his vegetarian in peace. Is that a bargain?"

Hanns looked up. The manager was smiling at him. Henrici started swaying from the knees and singing:

"Three times death looked out today
Mother, father, gone away;
Home and both your parents lost—
Alas! poor lad, by fortune tossed . . ."

"That's a Black Forest song, my boy. I often sang it in the internment camp in the Isle of Man, and afterwards in the Fatherland too, in the dear Fatherland, where they took away my last penny in the sacred inflation, the good Fatherland, the dear Fatherland, alas! poor lad by fortune tossed—"

Henrici spat. He was not laughing any more.

"I sang that song, all over the place, down in the Rhineland, where his satanic highness, the chairman of directors who won the Ruhr War, built himself houses. I often sang it on my bicycle in the rain.

"The empty-bellied beggar-man
Has to live as best he can:
But just look at Herr von Krupp. . . .
Alas, poor lad, by fortune tossed. . . .
And as I wandered, hopeless, lost,
'Mid icy wind and bitter frost,
A still, small voice came very near
And whispered poison in my ear;
The fatherland of man is where

He's free to work and breathe the air;
And hell's just any place at all
Where he's betrayed by capital."

"Are you drunk?" Hanns asked.

"Probably," Henrici chuckled. "I do get drunk every three months, and this time you were the one to suffer for it."

Henrici was sagging at the knees but his face was beaming.

"Very well, you'll stay, won't you?" he said to the boy. "Fräulein Irene wants you to stay and she asked me to tell you so."

Hanns shrugged his shoulders.

"Come, come. Don't be like that."

He stroked Hann's hair and walked over to the door, humming

"Three times death looked out today
Mother, father gone away;
Hitler, Krupp are just the same.
And the Church is in the game.
Alas, poor lad, by fortune tossed. . . ."

Hanns remained standing in the room motionless. The manager was obviously drunk. Poor devil, cheated of everything by fate. But what sort of generation was it to which these men belonged, who raged against the Fatherland because their bank accounts had vanished in the bad times and bit into their own flesh because the good times were over? All they cared about was their possessions. They cared for nothing but their peace and comfort. Was it not noble to love one's Fatherland when one possessed nothing at all? Should one not love one's Fatherland if it were the only possession one had left? The Realm would be born of poverty. Faith came from having nothing. Hunger gave strength to him who knew what he wanted. And all these people scuttled over to the Communists and started calculating how much everybody would have if everything were divided up. Surely they were nothing but bourgeois in their petty covetousness? Communism was nothing but the bourgeois garment turned inside out. But the Realm, that

new melody that came floating over the German hills, that organ note that came singing through Germany's ancient cities, that whisper that came trickling through the villages, was entirely above and apart from everyday petty necessities. The Realm was the great and holy commonwealth of all Germans of goodwill, of a noble band of brothers, a harmonious choir singing in the face of destiny. What they strove for was not bread or meat but honour and virtue. To them their task had been revealed. They knew what they had to do. They knew what they were in the world for. They were not in the world just for the sake of sullenly eating their way through it. The object of their lives was the realization of their dream of omnipotence, the dream of the reign of the Germans over a world that had got itself bogged in materialism. First must our hearts be satisfied, Hanns said to himself. What do our stomachs matter?

He stood in the middle of the room. He pushed his trunk over into the corner with his foot. I'll stay, he said. I'll stay. I'll shake their obduracy. I'll show them the goal. I'll shake them out of their despair. I'll convert them to the Realm.

He raised his arms and looked at himself in the mirror. He laughed at his reflection in the glass, as though it were looking back at him from the farther shore, from which the past thousand years would seem nothing but an evil, outlived day.

A cry brought him back to himself with a start. A voice was calling him from down below.

"Herr Diefenbach!"

He looked out of the window.

"You young hothead!" Fräulein Degerloch called out laughing. "Hurry up, our Fräulein's waiting for you. Hurry up!"

"Where is she?" Hanns called out.

"In the garden, behind the conservatory, where the watercress is. My brother-in-law who lives in Zürich, where he's got a delikatessen shop would call you a fine young fellow-me-lad, he would!"

She turned away. Hanns dashed downstairs, ran through the farm and disappeared into the garden.

"Just to let you know," Fräulein Degerloch remarked to the peck-

ing hens, "my brother-in-law is just as well off as he was before the war. He's a neutral, he is, you silly clucking lot of brutes, you!"

Hanns hurried through the house to the conservatory. It lay right at the other end of the garden, exposed to the light on all sides. The rays of the sun were caught and intensified in the panes of glass, and the light, after passing through the conservatory, fell white and brilliant upon the hedges and the motionless foliage.

Hanns stopped outside the conservatory door. A few steps of hard-trodden lime led down to it. A dry smell of earth, pollen and fragrant water came up to meet him. Hanns did not move. Irene was a few yards away from him, standing by a small iron table. She had raised her arms to take down from a shelf above her head a pot containing a remarkably shaped green plant. It was a queer, fleshy growth with bristling thorns. Hanns had never troubled himself about flowers. Flowers were for women, a trivial if pleasant leisure-hour pastime. But now he watched the girl carefully bending over that fantastic growth and stirring a brilliant scarlet bloom by breathing upon it through her rounded hands in the captured light of the sun.

Silently, almost breathlessly, he stood before this picture. Only five paces separated him from Irene, but the distance seemed to him a dangerous abyss. He forgot Henrici. He forgot his defiant resolve to remain on the estate as a forerunner of the future Realm. His heart beat in his throat. He saw nothing but that bloom and the girl in front of him. He saw nothing but her brown arms, the soft curves of her neck, the dark weight of her hair and the brow that might have been of spun silk.

She must have felt his presence, for she turned and looked at him. Behind her the light played and sparkled in the windows. In her left hand she held the bloom, as though to protect it. Her eyes were large, dark and searching, and there was in them the frightening quality of beauty. Now he ought to speak. But his tongue was dry and cleaved to his palate. This, he felt, was a repetition of the stupefaction there had been between them that time on the road to Erlenbach. He lowered his head. He did not want to look at

her. But when he looked at the floor he saw her image still. And when he looked through the window towards the vine-terraces sloping away towards the south, lo! her image was among the vineyards. He turned his head again and looked at her and knew that he was lost.

Irene put the bloom down. She held on to the table, which was covered with the brown, damp earth. She spoke, and as she spoke she dropped her head. Her words sounded from far away, as though they came from beyond the wall, from a dreamland, from far behind the light.

"I wanted to apologize to you," she said. "I did not know that what I said this afternoon would offend you. I didn't want to hurt you. Really I didn't."

The conservatory was going round and round before Hann's eyes. Only the bloom seemed to stay still. It was red and flaming, like a heart.

"It is so terrible when people torment one another. They often do not know when they are doing it. I did not know. What shall I do to make you believe me? Oh!"

And suddenly she was before him, her body only half a pace away from his body, and he felt her breath and her fragrance was in his nostrils and fire suddenly seemed to flare forth from the bloom.

"Oh!" said the girl. "You must stay! Please stay!"

He did not see her turn and cover her eyes with her arm. He was only aware of her passing him and going out into the garden, where her footsteps sounded ever gentler as she trod the yellow, shifting sand between the flower beds.

CHAPTER IV

STAHLIN, the master-baker, went to the Blue Bear Inn for his morning drink somewhat earlier than usual this Friday. They had come for Elfriede during the night, and he had gone with her to the hospital. Her operation was at nine o'clock, and Dr. Wachtel was coming to the Blue Bear immediately afterwards to tell him all about it. Stählin knew Friedel couldn't last much longer. She had been losing weight for the last six months; her flesh hung loosely and dismally on her bones, and she did nothing but grumble and scold all day long. What had he to do with politics? she would say. He was a master-baker. They had no need of a motor-car, and there was no need for Doris to go to a boarding school in Switzerland. This idea of a boarding school in Switzerland! It was the very limit. What did they want this new house for, with its ridiculous central heating and two bath-rooms and a fire-place in the hall? When he tried to make her understand that all this was necessary for a politician and explained that he was a public man, she always wept, declared he was a lazy master-baker and said she wanted to go back to their old house, where the smell from the bakehouse was so good, and she felt at home, even if she did have to light the oven every morning.

Stählin felt dead-beat. He sat staring at the decanter of red wine, which caught the light of the morning sun. Autumn was mild this year, with plenty of sun.

Would Friedel succumb to the operation? Dr. Wachtel said it was fifty-fifty. It would be a pity to have to part now. He had married into the bakery as a young man twenty-seven years ago. Friedel had been a fine girl then. The way she laughed when you

tickled her. When his father-in-law was alive he often came and banged on their bedroom door at night. "Don't make such a row," the old man would say. They never took the slightest notice of him but only laughed. Stählin drank. Why did that occur to him now? Was it a bad sign? How weakly she lay on the stretcher in the ambulance. That's what happened to flesh and blood. Yet their laughter in the night and the old man's shuffling footsteps outside the door seemed only yesterday.

He called for a cherry brandy. Henri Jockel brought the bottle himself. "Courage," he said and sat down beside Stählin. They drank two glasses, wiped their mouths and listened to the noises of the market outside.

"How old is she?" asked Jockel.

"Forty-nine."

"Did you wire the children?"

"Oh, it won't be as quick as all that. The end doesn't come so suddenly as that."

Henri Jockel said nothing. He had looked up abdominal cancer in Dr. Bilz's big book *The Family Doctor,* that morning. "It can last for years," he lied out of friendship for Stählin.

"If it has to be, it has to be," the other said. "I'll devote myself entirely to politics. She never liked it. She was a hindrance, as a matter of fact. What do women understand about such things?"

He considered for a moment, then planted his fist down firmly on the table. "We of the middle classes must stand squarely together," he said.

Henri Jockel nodded. "Against these damned taxes," he said.

"And against the Reds too," Stählin added.

Henri Jockel sighed.

"If only the middle classes were united," he said.

"They will be," said Stählin with a laugh. "At the next election I'm standing for the Diet. Schrader got me round with his flat roofs recently, but just you wait till I'm in Stuttgart. Then things will begin to hum."

"Got you round? Got you round?" Jockel chuckled. "You mean

you had the confounded piece of good fortune to be the owner of two gardens on the site they were going to build on!"

The two men looked at each other malevolently.

"They could have built elsewhere if they liked, of course," Henri Jockel said sweetly. Stählin made no reply. "You must have made a clear fifteen thousand out of that deal," Henri Jockel went on, filling the glasses. "That's a pretty penny. You're a lucky fellow, my dear Bartel."

"I didn't make so much as seven thousand out of it," Stählin expostulated. "And the gardens were worth at least twice as much!"

Henri Jockel shook his head.

"I don't blame you," he said. "I'm all for making as much as you can when you've got the chance. They did us down enough during the inflation."

"The Reds—" Stählin started.

"Here's to you," Henri Jockel interrupted, raising his glass.

They went on drinking for another half-hour and then Henri Jockel went back to his office. As he shook Stählin's hand, he said to himself: It wasn't seven thousand but fourteen thousand, you cunning old twister, because one of the gardens was nominally your brother-in-law's. Aloud he said:

"God grant everything goes well with Friedel, old chap."

Stählin ordered a second litre of wine. His sleepless night had made him thirsty. Jockel's insinuations indeed! He could sell his gardens to anyone he liked.

Even if he had voted for Schrader this time, next time, when matters of principle were at stake, at the debate on the theatre, he would show the gentlemen where they got off. He angrily took a pencil from his pocket and started scrawling figures on a piece of paper. Slowly the fat, ponderous man's face relaxed. A suspicion of a happy smile appeared as he wrote: "I. G. Dyes, 5; Tubize, 100: Snia Viscosa; Salt Defurt. Fuchs motor-cars. The shares added up to a long column. A single battle-front of good fortune.

By this time sunshine was streaming in through the windows. The noises of the market began. During the past year, Herr Stählin, master-baker, had ceased to be a man of middle-class modesty,

solidity and moderate means. During the past year he had been on the way to riches—remarkable riches, because all you needed to acquire them was pluck. He had learned the recipe quickly enough at the time the Economic Party was formed and he became its leader and representative on the city council. A syndic, a very clever young man indeed, had come from Berlin, and opened his eyes over a glass of wine. The country was swimming in money. Credit was as cheap as blackberries.

It had been easy for the master-baker to get credit from the bank. He paid in twenty thousand marks—all that he had managed to save out of the inflation—and fifty thousand were put to his credit. He bought stocks and shares for this amount and deposited them with the bank. The shares rose and he sold out at a profit. He bought again, and his credit went up to seventy-five thousand. He sold at a profit once more and his credit went up to a hundred thousand. And that's where it stood today. Shares worth that amount were credited to his name. What a paradise! Stählin added up. Eighty, one hundred and five, one hundred and sixty, two hundred and twenty . . . If I sold out today I should have two hundred and thirty-seven thousand marks. It didn't make him feel the least bit dizzy. It was a magnificent reality. His new house in a high-class residential district had come out of this reality. Doris lived on it in Switzerland and Wilhelm, with his aristocratic connections, in Berlin; and his expensive American motor-car, and his grand piano—a Steinway, not a Steinweg, if you please—depended on it, to say nothing of Friedel's taking the cure, besides her operation and the idyllic family vault beneath the copper-beech tree in the cemetery. As for the bakery, good gracious, his employees looked after that; it brought in just enough for household expenses. But the Stock Exchange and his credit at the bank brought him wealth and affluence, the new life that was opening out before him now, the greater world, with its vistas still enticing enough at the age of fifty-four. The venture into politics, the dream of being elected to the Reichstag, the invitations from ministers of State and company chairmen—how could he achieve all these without the Stock Exchange?

Tears of joy were in Stählin's eyes as he sat over that piece of paper. Whenever he was excited or upset he would calm himself by contemplating the reality of those figures. True, Megerle, the bank manager, had advised him to sell out cautiously a few days ago, but he had done that last year and then there had come that rise in artificial silk. The world was safe enough. No threat of war was on the horizon. Buildings were going up everywhere. The inns were crowded. And instead of employing innumerable workers machines were used nowadays. That made production better and cheaper.

Stählin had forgotten all about Friedel. He was visualizing himself in the lobbies of the Reichstag; and at the Scala in the evening.

The sound of firm footsteps coming down the stairs brought him back to himself with a start.

"Oh, doctor," said Stählin, rising to his feet with an embarrassed smile.

Dr. Wachtel was scarcely more than thirty years old. His reputation as a surgeon extended far beyond Siebenwasser. His tongue was feared as much as his knife was respected. He said he recognized no authority but death; and he enjoyed telling people the truth, unmercifully and without reference to their feelings. He was a doctor first and a doctor all the time. Dr. Wachtel set no store by any other kind of knowledge.

He sat down at Stählin's table; Stählin called agitatedly for another glass. The waiter arrived and Stählin poured out the wine. Dr. Wachtel drank, wiped his mouth with the back of his hand and looked at the master-baker. In some embarrassment Stählin put the paper with the figures on it back in his pocket.

"Tell me, Herr Stählin, where were you during the war?" Stählin swallowed. What was the meaning of this? What had this to do with abdominal complaints?

"First I was in the advance to Maubeuge," he stammered out.

"And then?" asked the doctor.

"I was at general headquarters at Brussels."

"Oh, in Brussels, I see," said the doctor. He nodded, pleased.

"And, of course, while you were in Brussels you often went out in the evening?"

"Yes, sometimes, when I got leave."

What on earth was he getting at? Did he know something about that affair of the truck-load of dried vegetables? Nonsense.

"I see, sometimes. You weren't always alone on those excursions, of course?"

"I don't understand, doctor. I often went with pals, naturally."

The doctor's eyes were frigid behind his glasses.

"And then you had one little drink and then another little drink, and so on, didn't you? And then you all went to the brothel."

"But, doctor, please, I don't understand this at all! What do you mean?"

"I want to know whether you had gonorrhea."

The master-baker sprang to his feet.

"Sit down," the doctor said, perfectly calmly. "Generals have had it too."

Stählin sat down and stared into his glass. In his mind's eye he saw the estaminet once more. What was it called? Frou-Frou. Yes, Frou-Frou. And Yvette. What a girl. Nothing like her in Siebenwasser. He licked his lips.

"I quite believe that it was very enjoyable," said the doctor. "How long were you treated?"

"Three weeks," Stählin stammered out.

"As I suspected," said the doctor with a grin. "And when you came home you said nothing whatever about it and had no more treatment and took no precautions for your wife. Cowardly, wasn't it?"

Stählin said nothing. This man with the penetrating gaze read all he wanted to know in his face. Oh, if only it hadn't been necessary to operate on her.

Suddenly he heard Dr. Wachtel's voice again.

"I'm no moralist, my dear Councillor Stählin, and I am quite prepared to believe that an experience like that, compared to similar experiences in Germany, has its charms. But I am compelled to

inform you that your wife is on the point of dying, somewhat belatedly, on the field of honour."

Stählin jumped up, staggered over towards the doctor and gripped a chair, hard. He stared at this fiend confronting him.

"An operation would have been useless. Her whole inside has been ravaged, Herr Stählin. It's no use crying about it. Face up to death now as you faced up to love years ago in Brussels. By this evening it will all be over."

Dr. Wachtel rose to his feet.

"I beseech you," Stählin shrieked, clutching the doctor by the arm.

"I am not God Almighty," said the doctor. "You can wish your wife nothing better than a quick and painless exit from this peculiar world."

Dr. Wachtel walked quietly across the room.

"The Sister has been informed. Your wife is not in pain. You can visit her. Take her a few flowers. They may give her pleasure when she opens her eyes."

The doctor left the room. Stählin stood under the clock. It struck twelve, and the apostles popped out.

Henri Jockel had left his office and was on the way to the bank. It was market day. The streets were packed. The peasants had come in from far away in the hills. Henri Jockel had five thousand marks in his wallet—a very nice profit on the summer's trading. He had had the money ready in his safe for a whole week, but had hesitated to take it out. Minchen, the dear Hamburg goose, had been worrying him for a long time to try his luck at speculation. It was as easy as anything, and all the regular customers did it. Henri Jockel was a prudent man. He had lost a hundred and forty thousand marks in War Loan and the rest in the inflation. Why on earth should the Almighty suddenly change his mind and show consideration to the Germans now? No, Henri Jockel had no trust in God. He had no trust in shares. And Stählin and Megerle and all the other business people could outbid each other ten times over so far as he was concerned. He would not join in. He had

mentioned it to the American recently, but the excellent Bäuerle had refused to express an opinion. I'm an agriculturist, he said, and I'm only too pleased never to hear anything about the Stock Exchange. It was all very well for him to talk. He was in clover. Why, he was rolling in money. And he had an estate he could play with like a child with a toy. He could look on calmly and keep cool about it. Marvellous to be in a position like that. Henri Jockel felt his wallet through the material of his jacket. He had twenty-seven thousand marks in the bank now. The others all had an extra nought at the end of their accounts. Crazy, those pieces of paper. But wasn't what he had on him paper too? Since the war the whole world was made of paper. Suppose there were a fire? Good heavens!

When he entered the bank it was crowded. Pale-faced clerks were dashing about behind the grille. Nearly everyone was telephoning. He heard Megerle's voice coming from the manager's office. There was an uproar. Henri Jockel looked round. He saw many of his customers in the throng—May, Haberland, and Fehrenbach; and there was Aschaffenburg, just going into Megerle's room. What's the matter with them all? They all look ill. May's hands are actually trembling. Good heavens, there's Fehrenbach slumping down in a chair, exclaiming: "It's all over!"

Henri Jockel went up to the counter. "I want to pay this in, please." The clerk looked at him in amazement. "Pay something in?" Why, what's the matter? At that moment Haberland came up to him. "Henri," he said. "What a smash!" Henri Jockel held the wad of notes tight in his hand. "Who's gone smash?" he asked. "The Stock Exchange," Haberland sobbed. "Yes, and we've all been speculating, you know. Everything's gone, Henri, there's nothing left but debts."

Henri Jockel quickly put his money back into his breast-pocket. "What, again?" he said, grinning at Haberland. May was sitting on the sofa, laughing, to hide his tears. Fehrenbach stood up and shouted: "I'll give it to them!" and dashed out of the bank. "He's in for a hundred thousand in artificial silk," Haberland said.

Henri Jockel laughed. Proudly he straightened his tie.

"What did I always say?" he laughed.

Telephones rang and the clerks dashed about behind the counter like officers trying to rally an army in flight. Peaceful sunshine flooded the South Sea poster and the electric fan went on whirling and Megerle went on shouting in his office and Henri Jockel laughed, and Haberland, the cartage contractor, said softly and sadly:

"But, Henri, there was just a glimmer of hope again."

Henri Jockel left him standing there. Suddenly he thought of Stählin. He had read in Bilz that abdominal cancer was invariably fatal. That, if need be, could be borne. Such a thing was God's will. But the devil surely had Stählin by the ear as well. Henri Jockel dashed out into the street. He was saved. He was all right. He would invest his five thousand marks in wine. But Stählin—

Holy Snia Viscosa, have compassion on thine own.

At first Stählin sat brooding miserably. The inn was filling with market people and peasants. They knew him and drank his health. When he told them that Friedel, his wife, was dying, they averted their eyes and were silent. He went on drinking cherry brandy. For a long time his head seemed to be full of nothing but a blue haze, against which his confused thoughts kept bobbing up and down—Yvette and the doctor, the old man outside the bedroom door, Doris and Mont Blanc, Wilhelm and that clever Durchzieher, the motor-car and the Reichstag. But he held tight to the piece of paper in his hand. He put it down on the table before him and contemplated the smiling figures. Good-bye, Friedel, he muttered. Yes, I'll take you some flowers. You're going away and I'm left behind. I was a cad, but it can happen to generals too. I didn't mean any harm. What did that beast Wachtel say? You are dying on the field of honour? The man's got no respect for anything. Only a Bolshevik could talk like that. It's absolutely impossible for it to have been my fault; there cannot be such a terrible penalty for one night's drinking. It's absurd. Such a thing cannot be. Does God exist for us to suffer like this?

Stählin sat perfectly still. He looked at the clock and counted up

to sixty. When the hand moved at the right moment he was as pleased as a child. Then he looked laughingly upon the list of his investments and made up his mind to turn them into hard cash. Now that he was alone and there was no more Friedel to grumble at him, he felt a terrible emptiness all round him. But the money remained. A new life. A new life.

He rose, paid the bill and walked a little unsteadily towards the exit. The peasants touched their caps in silence as he went out. Outside in the bright street he had to breathe deeply in order not to lose control of his whirling thoughts. Then he caught sight of the flowers, resplendent among the market stalls. Stählin went and bought roses, carnations, dahlias and early asters indiscriminately. The big man gripped the flowers under his powerful arm and pressed them against his chest. Everyone looked at him sympathetically, for his misfortune was already known. He went into a confectioner's and bought two bars of nougat. Friedel had always liked nougat so much when she was his fiancée. "I simply adore it," she always said when she took a bite. Stählin had just crossed the market when somebody touched him on the shoulder. It was Henri Jockel.

"Come along to my office," he said with a grave expression on his face.

Stählin was startled.

"Is she dead?" he whispered.

Henri Jockel shook his head.

"No," he said. "Something much worse."

The Blue Bear was only a few minutes away. Stählin, still holding his flowers tight, walked along with Henri Jockel.

They went into the office, and Jockel locked the door behind them.

Then he took a bottle of old French brandy from the little cupboard, filled two glasses, and said:

"You're a poor man, my dear Stählin."

Half an hour later Jockel called Minchen into the office. She found the master-baker lying with his head on the table, laughing, laughing as if he had been told the funniest joke in all the world.

At two o'clock that afternoon an open taxicab drove up to the hospital and Henri Jockel and Stählin got out. The streets were empty. The porter let the two men in. They were shown into a waiting-room. A few minutes later the Sister came in. "It's doubtful whether she'll recognize you any more," she said to Stählin. He followed her along the white corridor. A single carnation was in his hand. They went upstairs in the lift. There was a sickly sweet smell in the room. Dr. Wachtel was standing at the bedside. Stählin stepped closer. That was her face. That was Friedel.

He whispered: "Friedel!" The patient did not move. Her eyes were closed. "Your husband's here," said Dr. Wachtel. "Your husband," said the Sister. "It's I," murmured Stählin.

The dying woman opened her eyes. There she lay, staring rigidly at them, through them, beyond them. Then she caught sight of the carnation. Stählin was standing close to the bed, clutching it. She tried to raise herself. The Sister supported her.

"Give it me," Elfriede Stählin whispered, taking the flower.

"Mother!" shrieked the master-baker, collapsing on to his knees.

They raised him up and led him, sobbing, out into the corridor. The doctor told him to go into the waiting-room. But he did not go into the waiting-room. He went straight out into the street, without Henri Jockel noticing him.

Hanns went into the wood immediately after the midday meal. He was glad Henrici had given him work in the fir plantation. There was a great deal to be done there against the winter. In particular the fence must be repaired to prevent fleeing animals from breaking in during the hunting season. Hanns had been working here alone for days past, and liked it very much.

He shouldered his axe and plodded along beside the cart. The vintage had begun. The sky was blue and girls could be heard singing far away in the valley. Hanns led the horse, for it was a stiff climb. The cart was full of earth and manure.

Soon they reached the top and followed a track which ran beside a railing. They went southwards through a meadow in which the second hay-crop lay, and passed the borders of the wood.

The plantation was near the seven brooks which gave the town its name. Working up here you could always hear the sound of water trickling down into the valley, and you could see the river winding its way between the confining hills.

Hanns unharnessed the horse and let it graze on a piece of grass land between the trees. He let down the sides of the cart and the manure and earth rolled to the ground. Then he took the shovel and strewed the black-brown earth and manure in a wide circle over the bed all ready for planting.

It was warm. The sun beat down on the rust-red trees. Hanns perspired copiously and took off his jacket. He whistled. He felt fine.

He finished strewing the bed and went into the shed, which was used for keeping tools and as a shelter for the woodsmen. He fetched a hammer and nails and started repairing the paling. He had procured a lot of small, thin sticks three days ago. These he pegged in and bound together with cross-pieces between. His energetic hammering sounded loudly through the woods. The horse grazed peacefully and a kite wheeled in the bright patch of sky above the plantation.

Shortly after three o'clock in the afternoon Stählin, the master-baker, entered his old house. It was situated in the Topfengasse, and was a small, narrow building with tall, slate-grey gables. Stählin sent for the foreman, who had been running the bakery for the past year. Together they went into the room behind the shop. Stählin could smell the bread, and he heard the tinkle of the shop door and saw the oval pictures of his parents-in-law on the wall, and the nut-brown bureau and under it the footstool for Friedel's feet. The foreman, much astonished at Stählin's dishevelled appearance, asked if he might get him anything.

"A writing-pad, two envelopes and some brandy." The baker sent an apprentice to fetch these things. The brandy arrived first. Stählin poured himself a coffee-cup full, and the foreman had a drink too. Stählin started writing, using the foreman's pencil, which was stained with flour and dough. He put the letters in the

envelopes, stuck them down and handed them to the foreman. "Have these sent to the bank and the hospital today." He drew his gold watch from his waistcoat pocket—it was a huge thing with a heavy chain—and put it down on the table in front of the foreman. "That's for you," he said. "I've been meaning to make you a present for a long time. It's the only thing I've got with me at the moment, so you had better take it."

The foreman was startled out of his life. He began stammering out refusals. "Please stop making a fuss. I insist on your taking it," said Stählin. The foreman hesitatingly picked up the watch. It's sorrow for his wife and the effects of the brandy. I'll give it back at the first opportunity, he said to himself. In the meantime Stählin had left him. The foreman heard him walking into the dwelling house. The rooms upstairs were let. "Excuse me, may I just have a look round?" he heard Stählin say. Next he heard him walking through the old rooms. Then he heard him in the bakery. Then he saw him walking slowly across the yard, as if looking for something. Then Stählin walked out, without turning round, not quickly but swaying slightly.

When the foreman went back to the bakery he found the apprentices grinning from ear to ear. Herr Stählin had distributed one hundred and twenty marks among them. How a thing like that can affect a man, the foreman said to himself, collecting the money and putting it under lock and key.

Stählin walked along the Topfengasse. He passed the school and saw the town hall and St. Andrew's Church. He was aware that people greeted him, but all that was far away, behind a veil. He reached the bastion and saw the river below and the meadows and the vineyards in the distance. Just look at all that, he said to himself. What's it all for? He walked behind the bastion and towards the woods. He sat down in a field. Not a cloud was in the sky. How soft the air was. Stählin drew out his wallet. It contained letters, receipts, photographs and an identity card. He tore the letters, and the receipts into small pieces and the identity card too. A tiny brook bore the pieces of paper rapidly away. How quickly they went. He continued sitting in the field for a long time. He went

on gazing down at the town. The houses were swaying slightly and the church towers looked crooked. The bells started ringing. Let them. The Almighty didn't hear. Even if the whole world turned into a single funeral bell, He would remain deaf. What do I care? Stählin said to himself. That was his last thought.

The seat of his trousers was damp. He stood up and went towards the wood. He climbed uphill between the trees.

In the midst of the seven streams there is a small plateau from which you can see right down the valley to the Rhenish plain below. There were a number of seats there, and a wooden pavilion had been built in one corner.

Stählin went into the pavilion and sat down at the table. He looked up at the ceiling. Yes, there was a good, solid cross-beam. Stählin gave a nod of satisfaction and took off his coat and waistcoat. Then he went outside and started pulling up one of the fixed seats. He had to go on pulling a long time before the thing gave way. He carried it into the pavilion and put it on the table. Then he took off his braces and knotted them into a noose round the cross-beam. He stood on the seat and put his head through the noose. He looked down at the town and the valley and the distant Rhenish plain.

"Tripe!" he muttered. "Tripe!" and kicked the seat away. A crash shattered his consciousness.

Hanns had been working on the palings for two hours. He stood up, picked up his tools and put them away in the hut. The wind had changed. The bells from Siebenwasser sounded quite close. Hanns looked at his watch. It was five o'clock. He ran to the horse and harnessed it. Would she be punctual? he wondered.

He tied the horse fast and went back to the hut. He lifted the lid of a chest, took a large, square glass fish tank from it and carried it to the light. The bottom of the tank was covered with white sand, besides some little shells and stones. Green shoots were planted in the sand and the stones were arranged in tiers. The tank was half-full of water.

A fortnight ago Irene had said at table how much she would like

to have an aquarium. She announced that nothing gave her greater pleasure than contemplating the silent movements of fish. Hanns had promptly offered to make her an aquarium, and blushed so violently that everybody laughed, including Henrici. Henrici seemed a changed man altogether nowadays. That awful scene on Hann's first day had never been mentioned again. Henrici was just a quiet, reserved man going about his work. When he spoke to Hanns his words were brief and to the point, just as they were to everybody else. No mention was ever made of politics; that first explosion seemed to have cleared the air. Bäuerle, who was completely absorbed in his work on the estate, never so much as heard of the incident. His attitude to Hanns was friendly. When Hanns went down to Siebenwasser to attend the S.A. meetings on Saturday evenings he only smiled.

Hungrich was in command of the S.A. now. Jürgen called him a sergeant-major who dreamed he was a general. But you could put up with it. After all everything had altered now. Hanns even missed Gerhard far less. At the beginning of his stay he wrote to the officer twice. He had difficulty in finding things to say. He felt much more at peace now. That he knew for certain. In the evenings, when he came back from work, he often went over to the Bäuerles and played chess with Irene. They would sit in a corner of the gun-room and Schrader and Dr. Holzapfel, his old headmaster, would sometimes be there too. Dr. Holzapfel's presence did not embarrass Hanns in the least. The old man's attitude to him was perfectly friendly. And yet all that had happened only a little while ago. How long ago it seemed now. Hanns often wondered whether this was the effect of working on the land.

He put the fish tank down on the floor. He looked at the plants he had taken from the brooks two days ago and planted inside it. They had grown, and this gave him pleasure. It was splendid to see a thing grow. Later, when Irene comes, we'll get more plants out of the brooks and, with any luck, a salamander as well. Hanns took a large tin can with him. We'll put them in that. And when everything is planted I'll set it up down below in the yard, with running water, and I'll go to Heidelberg with

Irene and we'll buy some fish there. She promised she would come.

As he knelt gazing at the light on the rippling water a small stone suddenly hit him on the head. He sprang to his feet and saw Irene against the palings. Hanns picked up the tin can and strode out of the plantation.

"I've brought one too," Irene called out, showing him a can with a string attached to it so that one could hang it round one's shoulders. "And I've brought a shovel and a net too."

Hanns joined her. How charmingly she laughed.

"Let's go," he said.

They went into the beech wood in the direction of the brooks.

"Do you really enjoy all this bother with the fish tank or is it too childish for you?" Irene asked.

She walked along by his side. As the path was rough their arms often touched.

"It's not childish in the least," Hanns answered, looking straight ahead of him.

"But I thought you'd find a thing like that frightfully stupid. You've got far loftier ideas in your head. I mean, I thought you'd grown out of this sort of thing long ago."

Hanns felt Irene's gaze upon him. This was the first time they had been alone together since that day in the conservatory.

"Why did you tell me to stay that time?" Hanns asked.

"Wasn't it better that you did?"

After that they remained silent. They went on walking quickly. The leaves were already falling. When they reached the first brook Hanns knelt down and rolled up his sleeves.

"There are some lovely plants here," he said. "The kind that flower under water."

Irene knelt by his side and gazed into the clear water.

"Was that a fish?" Irene cried.

"No, a piece of wood," Hanns said.

He bent so low that his face nearly touched the water. He plunged his arm deep into the brook. "Give me the spade." Irene gave him the spade. Hanns had got hold of a plant and dug round it in a circle to free it from the earth. "Be careful," Irene

said, putting her hand on his shoulder. He distinctly felt the warmth of her arm through his shirt. Eventually the plant emerged. Hanns lifted it. The water fell in pearly drops from the fleshy, green, drooping branches.

"Here, put it in the can, with some water and some earth."

Hanns scraped some earth together and Irene scooped water from the brook with her hands.

They rose to their feet and went on. The wood grew thinner, and the gleaming plain below became visible between the branches.

Suddenly Hanns stopped still, and put his finger to his lips. Irene stood on tip-toe. On a smooth stone sat a little animal, rather like a lizard. It was inky-black, with golden spots. Hanns lay flat on the ground and advanced cautiously with the aid of his elbows. Then his hand shot forward. He seized the quivering thing in his fist and dropped it in the can.

"A salamander," he said, standing up and wiping his hands on his trousers. Irene was startled.

"What a strange look came into your eyes just then," she said.

"They're very difficult to catch," Hanns answered. He went down on all fours and started digging up another plant. A half-hour passed in this way. They walked along the brooks, catching little bearded fish with fins on their backs, and they found a dead trout and chased a water-spider.

Then they came to a seat. The valley and Siebenwasser, with St. Andrew's towers lay before them. They could see far down into the Rhenish plain.

They sat side by side. Their hands lay between them like swords.

Irene's heart spoke thus:

I dreamed you liked me, Hanns. Even the time I saw you on the road by the car, and we did the cross-word puzzle together I dreamed you liked me. I dreamed it even before that—long ago in Baltimore, when I looked at the picture of the youth in the fairy-wood. And when you came to us and I ran away from you and begged you to stay and was glad when you did stay, my dream was always of you. I do not know, but nowadays they say it's

silly to dream, and they say that this is a modern world and that love comes and goes like the weather. But no, it doesn't come and go like the weather. What sort of a world we are living in is all the same to me; all I want is to tell you I love you. The fish tank was nothing but an excuse of mine. What do I care about fish? What do I care about festival plays at Heidelberg, or about the estate or about Germany or the whole world? I care nothing about all those things, Hanns. What I care about is you. You, your eyes, your hands, your head, your legs, your perspiration, your laughter, your goings and your comings, what you look at and what you look away from, and when you speak and when you are silent. I care for everything you do, and they may laugh and think me stupid. I am stupid. I want to be stupid. But you must stay with me.

And Hann's heart answered:

I don't care deeply for any of the things that I'm doing. I don't want to go away and I don't want to die for Germany in the least. And I do not care so very much for Gerhard either. And I am not at all strong, and I don't want to be a hero, but I want to be with you. And when I see you I want to possess you only. I want to possess everything that is you. Apart from you I want nothing. You are all the world to me. And, Irene, I do not care about my mother or about the Leader, or about the Fatherland, or about honour and glory. All those things are in you, Irene. What others say doesn't matter in the least, Irene. All I listen to is you. Let them laugh. All I listen to is you. And I care nought for their motorcars and their Zeppelins, their airmen and their victories, Irene; I see only you. And I do not see the houses down there, nor the towers, nor the river, for they are but shadows, Irene, obscuring my eyes, my mind, my cowardice from you.

"What's the time?" Irene asked.

"A few minutes to six," Hanns answered and stood up. They picked up the tin cans with the plants and left the seat.

"Are you hungry?" asked Irene. "A little," answered Hanns. She took a piece of bread from her bag and gave it to him. He bit into it and walked on, munching.

"Is the salamander still there?" asked Irene. Hanns bent down and pushed the plants in one of the cans to one side.

"There he is."

Irene looked at the creature, standing close to Hanns.

"Do you suppose he's frightened?"

"Of course he is. It's no small matter suddenly to be flung among human beings!"

Suddenly Irene screamed. She pointed convulsively with her hands. She collapsed against Hanns, clutching his shoulder, seizing his head.

"Look!" she shrieked. "Look! There! Look!"

Hanns looked. He saw a man hanging from the pavilion ceiling, swaying like a human lamp. His trousers had slipped down a little and white flannel was visible.

Hanns flung the cans down. The water poured out, the plants were scattered over the earth, the salamander waddled rapidly away. Hanns ran to the pavilion.

Irene followed him. She felt he was in great danger. She went into the pavilion and saw Hanns standing on a seat with his arms around the swaying body.

"Hanns!" she cried.

"Hold him!" he called out. "Hold him by the legs."

She held the legs, seeing nothing. She only felt something heavy sinking, then lying down. Her hands touched the earth.

"Take this arm!" She took an arm. "Keep time with me!" He started counting. One, two, three. One, two, three. She moved the arm mechanically.

"Hanns!" she whispered. "Hanns!"

One, two, three. One, two, three. Stop!

She opened her eyes. Suddenly everything was still. Hanns was standing in front of her. "He's gone," he said. "He was Stählin, the master-baker."

Irene looked at the corpse. The man's false teeth had slipped down over his tongue. The neck veins were swollen. The shirt was torn across the chest.

Suddenly Irene was seized with a terrible fear. Suppressing

a dreadful shriek, she jumped over the corpse, flung her arms round Hanns, felt his body from the shoulders down to the waist and up to the neck again, and whether they were words or kisses, that fell from her lips she did not know. All she knew was that he was holding her tight in his arms.

They stood like this for a long time before they let each other go. The dead man lay in the light of the westering sun. The evening bells tolled from Siebenwasser. The mist rose in gentle swathes across the valley.

They spent a long time considering the best thing to do. Hann's first idea was to run to Siebenwasser to fetch the police. But that would have taken an hour. It was impossible to leave the corpse lying here like this. So they decided to carry the dead man to the estate. It was only ten minutes walk to the cart. They felt no fear when they lifted the body. They gave each other directions. They carried the body through the wood. It was getting dark when they got to the cart. Hanns shovelled some earth into it and they laid the corpse on it and covered it with a tarpaulin which Hanns found in the shed. They emptied the fish tank. "I don't want it any more," Irene said. Hanns took the reins and the horse jogged along. The moon rose bright over the meadow. Shooting stars fell in the east. They smelled the fragrance of the second crop and the mist rose from the valley.

When they reached Weissenfels they saw two policemen. They took the corpse into a shed. Bäuerle and Schrader arrived, with Megerle behind them. Megerle had a letter in his hand.

"A plain case of suicide," he said. "He wrote telling me he was going to commit suicide."

The police took charge of the corpse and took statements from Hanns and Irene.

Then they went into the house.

No one noticed that they were holding hands.

CHAPTER V

IT WAS a Saturday in March. The weather had changed overnight. A dry, warm wind blew across the fields from the west. Corn was beginning to grow in the fields. A light mist filled the furrows knee-high. Blue-green water formed into pools in the meadows and little streams trickled through the grass. The last snow was thawing in the shady hollows.

Hanns was walking down towards Siebenwasser. He had a faded old mufti overcoat on over his brown shirt. True, it was contrary to custom to go about like that, it simply wasn't done, in fact. But Irene had been so insistent on his protecting himself against the March air that in the end he had given in. When Irene asked something of him he gave in gladly. She spoke quite softly at such times, looking down at the floor as though it contained a secret.

Hanns stepped out vigorously. The conference was at five o'clock, and he wanted to be back for supper, so as to be able to give Irene a return game of chess. Yesterday she had lost. Irene looked so beautiful when trying perplexedly to protect her stupid King with her last solitary Knight. Last night there were actually tears in her eyes when he said Mate.

How things have changed, Hanns said to himself. I win and feel sorry about it.

Johann Kaspar had walked out on to the balcony. The sloping rays of the thin March sun fell on the yellow façade of the house. The first flowers were peeping up through the grass between the covered beds. The blueness of the sky seemed all-pervading. Smoke

rose snow-white from the chimneys. Bäuerle stretched himself. He felt this day in all the sinews of his being. Suddenly he started whistling:

I haven't got a father;
My mother loves me not.
But oh, my,
I'm far too young to die. . . .

Hanns, looking as small as a toy soldier against the expanse of country below, was threading his way between the swelling fields. Bäuerle broke off and watched the young man reaching the road and disappearing behind a clump of trees.

Winter had passed in quiet labour at Weissenfels. The events in Siebenwasser—ten bankruptcies since Stählin's death, the failure of the small canning factory in the valley, the wholesale dismissals at Weber's—did not affect Johann Kaspar as they affected everybody else. True, he knew the plight of many of the townspeople. Most of them had speculated on credit, and their assets were now transformed into liabilities. Their houses were in the hands of their creditors, their assets, their stock-in-trade, often even their actual earning capacity itself belonged now to the bank. A nightmare of indebtedness took the place of the jolly upward dance of the prices of their stocks. Interest payable upon bank loan and mortgage increased and multiplied like a swarm of insects. Credits were stopped, the State lowered wages and salaries, building activity slackened off. Worse than the loss of property was the collapse of confidence. All the same Bäuerle could not help feeling that the nervousness to which people fell a prey was exaggerated. Schrader in particular was the victim of an incurable anxiety. He said the middle classes would never recover from the shock. The inflation, as the last act in the tragedy of war, they had accepted; but this was too much. The plunge from hopefulness to despair was too headlong. But Bäuerle refused to admit that the situation was as tragic as all that. Of course it was painful to wake from a dream of ever-increasing prosperity and find oneself stark-

naked on the streets of reality, he said. And the fact that prosperity had been based on foundations that were the reverse of solid did not make the situation any easier to bear. Moreover, it was deplorable that when big displacements occurred within the capitalist system it was always the small man who had to foot the bill. But there was no need to give way to dismay because of that. Apart from the crisis the country was in a splendid state. After all, Germany had lost the war. Recovery would not come as quickly as all that.

"You see things from the outside, my dear Bäuerle," Schrader replied. "You do not know that for the last few years the Germans have believed that they won the peace."

Schrader took Johann Kaspar to one of Dern's meetings. At first Bäuerle only laughed. He felt that he had been taken to a Salvation Army mission hall. The pageantry, the music, the songs, the uniforms, the women's impassioned eyes, the theatrical conjuring up of fear from the platform, the atmosphere that reeked of missionary fervour, all reminded him of it. Only here was talk not of God but of race, and the Jew had taken the place of the devil.

The hall was full to overflowing, but Johann Kaspar regarded the whole performance as a farce put up by a few political sectarians. But soon he became thoughtful. Behind the spell-binding he suddenly became aware of a note that awakened in him an echo from his youth. All these threats against the State, the Jews, the French, the Marxists could, at a pinch, be borne. After all, this wasn't an academic lecture. But suddenly a sentence broke through the demagogic barrage like a fiery flame:

"Since nineteen-eighteen you trusted the world, you trusted Europe. You signed that ignominious treaty. You trusted in the world's decency and cast your honour away. And now, poor fools, they take away your last shirt as well. Jews lurk in every department of the government and have you by the throat. They have lulled you to sleep with talk of pacifism and humanity and other un-German words. Spurn them from you at last, we say. Spurn the whole world. We have never believed in its decency. They

have ridiculed us for ten years, but I tell you again, I shriek it in your faces: Germany must be strong! Germany must have her sword again! Only then will Germany be respected. Because it is by might and by terror that people are swayed."

Tremendous applause thundered through the hall. Schrader and Bäuerle walked quietly out into the street. They did not speak until they were at Henri Jockel's. "Like the dancing dervishes," Johann Kaspar said. The mayor nodded his head in assent. "That is what always happens in Germany," he said. "An attack on the people's economic well-being upsets their mental poise. You should have seen these people who are crazy for power now, whining for peace in nineteen-eighteen, my dear Bäuerle. They have no moral backbone whatsoever."

The two men stayed at Henri Jockel's for a long time that night. Bäuerle felt his father's old hatred rising within him. He tried to fight it off. Dr. Holzapfel remarked that he had given up thinking about politics, particularly about German politics, because they were so iniquitous and the true Germany lay outside and apart from such things. At that Bäuerle broke out. He said he had come home because he loved his people, because he loved them quite crazily, and didn't want to shut himself up in his room and draw the blinds and close the shutters. On the contrary, he wanted to open the windows wide and look joyfully out upon the countryside and the hills of his native land. And as for what Dern said about race, the whole thing was nothing but a fiendish trick of the Prussians to regain their influence over the people. Behind it was nothing but naked lust for power. Had the gentlemen seen the little shopkeepers preening and spreading their chests as Nordic men? The whole thing was nothing but parade-ground drill transferred to the mental sphere. "And it is blasphemous too, my dear Holzapfel. That is what I think of it," he added. The other men observed the American's excitement with a smile. When he described the Prussians as Wendish bastards who talked of race at the top of their voices because they themselves had none, Holzapfel nodded his head in agreement and drank his health.

But Bäuerle did not take long to calm down again. The estate

and its claims absorbed him once more. The first big harvest, resurrection of Weissenfels after the terrible curse that Ursel had laid upon it, was to take place this summer. When Bäuerle looked over the fields lying in the grip of winter he often thought of the seeds that lay beneath the dead surface, small white kernels that he had planted. And in his mind's eye he saw them swelling in the earth and he visualized the soft small shoots growing out of them, and all the land before his eyes was filled with their silent growth. This brought peace to his heart. He forgot the tumult of mankind. He seldom went down to Siebenwasser. He looked out upon the camp of the renegades, grumbling like Achilles in his tent. All the same there were hours when he became restless. Then he would dash to his books and seek for some sort of sense behind it all. Could it be that Dern was right? Could it be that the Germany of kindliness and moderation was but a phantom? But he found echoes of his own feelings in what he read. Goethe, Hölderlin, Lessing and Herder, the unconscious heritage he carried about within him, were on his side. They, too, were opposed to brute force, desired the elevation of humanity over race. After these hours with his books he would come back refreshed and with renewed strength. It will not happen, he said to himself. They cannot betray themselves so utterly as that.

There was another thing that moved him. He saw how Irene had changed. Ever since that evening when Hanns and she brought Stählin's body to the house, the girl had been different. Irene had grown more restless and more beautiful. The peace in her eyes was suddenly enlivened by a look of wonderment. When the boy was not on the estate Bäuerle could sense the tender unrest in her voice. He observed how restless her movements became if Hanns stayed in Siebenwasser longer than she expected, how she was suffused as with a ray of light when the boy came back.

Johann Kaspar could not make up his mind whether or not to intervene. The children were too young, and the boy was tied up with all Dern's devilries besides. He made inquiries about him from Henrici and Holzapfel, and was brought up sharply against the dreadful homelessness of these twenty-year-old youths, who knew

nothing of the values of the century from which Bäuerle sprang. Bäuerle saw how deeply the war had bitten into their souls. Who was to blame? It was his generation who for four years had sung the praises of brute force as though it were a hymn pleasing to God. It was his generation, in every country alike, who had violated their own law. That was where the blame lay. We betrayed our principles, Bäuerle said to himself, and now we are confronted with the reckoning. Oh! that Treaty of Versailles. Here is your answer, sullen Clemenceau! You could not have put a better weapon into the hands of the Prussians than this boy. Thus was Bäuerle caught in the horns of a dilemma. Guilt and innocence were joined in an agonizing tangle. He bore no resentment against Hanns. He noticed the lad's quiet gratitude for every act of kindness, he observed how happy he made Irene when he was kind to Hanns. He sent him to the agricultural winter school, he let him pass the driving test, he was kind to him, he gave him every opportunity at his work. Bäuerle hated nothing more than forcing people's opinions, the source of all dishonesty in the world.

There came an evening when Irene said good night to him and kissed him as usual on the left temple. Her lips were tender and careful. Johann Kaspar felt that it was impossible for him to trespass within the enchanted circle of her love. As she left him and stopped just for a second at the door to say good night again, before his eyes he seemed to see Juana, Juana, who was asleep beneath the dwarf-tree in the cemetery at Baltimore, Juana, the only dream he would take with him out of this world. He saw once more the aura that seemed to shine around her beloved head. It had not faded. It survived in the child's eyes, in the modesty of her limbs, in the bewildered tenderness of her voice, in the flash of her eyelashes.

Bäuerle forgot the passage of time. Often when the children played chess in the warm glow of evening, their serious heads bowed over the board, his gaze would fall upon Irene as from a great distance, and for a moment Juana would seem to be before him in the living flesh.

". . . private life must cease from this moment. What I mean is that anyone afraid of the task ahead of us should clear out now while the going is good. The Leader demands blind obedience. A whole generation is voluntarily sacrificing its freedom in order to save Germany." Kalahne dropped his voice. "Therein lies our tragedy and our happiness."

The men sitting round the table were in deadly earnest. Not one of them moved. Hanns looked at Dr. Kalahne's face. He was pale and his eyes were shining. He was the only one in mufti. The others were listening to him.

How silent Dern had suddenly become, Dern who was usually so noisy and blustering. He hadn't even brought his riding-whip along. Hungrich's pointed rat's teeth clasped his lower lip. He didn't look at Kalahne either. Both Dern and Hungrich knew that from this day on the little doctor was in charge of the organization of the whole region. He had returned from Munich with full powers and was responsible to nobody but the Leader.

Kalahne spread a paper on the table.

"I have put down here in their proper order the rôles that are to be undertaken by the various departments of our organization. Instructions will be sent out in the next few days. Now I shall merely tell you briefly what our aims are. The time has come for the Movement to proceed to decisive action. The situation is ripe. The bourgeoisie have been stirred and recent events have torn their middle-class ideals to tatters. These millions must now be won over to us. We have decided to take up the struggle on a legal electoral basis. The times for armed risings and such romantic nonsense have gone for good. I forbid any conniving at illegal activities. Anyone guilty of such activities will be out of the Party in an hour."

The sentences were short and sharp. Hanns's impression was that orders were being read out.

"The campaign of meetings is now to be started with the force of a series of hammer-blows. They will be aimed particularly at the lower middle-class masses. Disappointment over the economic collapse is so great among these people that it is possible to talk

quite soberly of their anti-capitalistic yearnings. These yearnings are to be exploited with all the means in our power. If we don't give them something to seize upon in time there is a danger of these masses going over to the Communists. The bait that we now hold out to them is: (1) anti-Semitism; (2) our national ignominy is to be represented as having been intensified now by a conspiracy of foreign capitalist groups; (3) we are to hold up to them our struggle against the political parties, which are to be represented as battened on by corrupt and unscrupulous leaders. An atmosphere must be created in which the small man must believe himself to have been sold and betrayed. We must make his flesh creep. These people must be hypnotized until they fall down like a lot of hens. The best way of doing this is by making scandalous exposures. The petty bourgeois is vindictive by nature. Let us exploit his vindictiveness, let us intensify his fears, let us compel him to our will, and then the first and decisive breach will have been taken."

Kalahne stopped. He looked at Jürgen Winkler, smiling.

"There seems to be one Party-comrade among us whom these tactics do not suit," he said.

"Yes," said Jürgen. "They do not suit me. I hate the bourgeoisie. I came to the Leader because of my hatred of the bourgeoisie, who are spread all over Germany like a layer of soft dough; and now you want us to throw in our hand with them. That's wrong."

Kalahne looked at Jürgen.

"You are too honourable," he said. "That's wrong."

Kalahne's voice was sharp.

"Nobody knows better than I that we shall never make the heroic man of that soft dough, as you call it," he said. "I know what a revolting atmosphere their bourgeois souls exude. But I tell you—and with these words I terminate the discussion—that the way to power lies through these little people. Every revolution has its seamy side. Are we æsthetes? or do we want the power?"

Suddenly his voice rang out sharp and loud. His expression was one of mocking scorn. He clasped his long, bony fingers together so that the bones cracked.

"Does anybody seriously suppose that when we have got the power we shall treat these people otherwise than as scum? The Revolution will begin only after our victory, dear Party-Comrade Winkler."

Jürgen said nothing. Kalahne returned to his papers. Dern and Hungrich looked at Stormtroopleader Winkler with a scornful expression.

"I have a small document," Kalahne went on, "which will prove invaluable for our struggle here in Siebenwasser. The way it came into my hands was not entirely clean, it is true, but we are not moralists. You know when the contracts for the housing scheme were handed out the Hansa Stores, alias Herr Aschaffenburg, received an order for sixty-six bath-rooms. Very well."

He picked up the piece of paper and read out:

"Kaufhaus Hansa
Fur Department
Received from Frau Schrader RM 215, two hundred and fifteen marks, special price for a gentleman's mink and beaver fur coat.
Siebenwasser, 18.12.1929.
pp. Hansa Stores,
Arnheim."

At first there was dead silence. Then Dern's fist crashed down on the table. His face had gone flaming red and his mouth was open wide. "Give it to me!" he exclaimed. "Give it to me!"

Kalahne put the receipt back in his case. "I shall decide what is to be done with it myself," he said. But Dern was not to be restrained. He snatched the case from Kalahne's weak hands, took the piece of paper, stood up and read it once more, roaring with laughter. "Now I've got the Jew!" he shouted. "Now I've got the Jew!" He walked round the table and opened the door. "Mother Döring!" he called out. "Two litres of wine!"

Hanns and Jürgen walked along the river bank. The grey dawn was rising over the city. Hanns felt the wine he had drunk. Dern had forced drink on him. "It was all a misunderstanding,

my boy," he said. "I was thinking of a different family of Diefenbachs altogether. What with our racially polluted holy Jewish realm of the German people a mistake of that sort's the most natural thing in the world." He offered Hanns his hand and put the glass in front of him. It spilled, and drops of wine fell on the table like false tears. "Come and see us some time," he said to the boy. But Hanns looked away. If his father had been alive and had been standing behind him now he would have struck the fellow on the swollen smooth head above that great grinning face with the flat of his sword. A fellow like that to talk of race, Hanns said to himself. That coarse, gaping mouth, that fat flesh supported on those short legs. And this creature possessed his mother and dreamed of the blood of the white horses.

"Why are you shuddering like that?" Jürgen asked, taking him by the arm. They walked across the bridge. "I was thinking of Dern," Hanns answered. Jürgen said nothing. Discipline forbade his speaking. "Have you heard from Gerhard?" he asked. "No," Hanns answered. "I haven't heard from him for months." "He's on the staff at Munich now," Jürgen said. "Everything's being re-organized there. Just you wait and see, Hungrich won't last much longer. Dern is too popular!"

Hanns laughed.

"What do I care?" he said. Jürgen stopped in his tracks.

"What's the matter with you?" he asked. "I've noticed it for weeks."

"I'm ill," Hanns said taking Jürgen's hand. "I can't hate any more."

The mayor had read through the finance committee's report. He was sitting in his room. It was a fine, blue morning.

Eighteen per cent decrease in the return on the rates since the first of January, he read. Gas and electricity, twenty-two per cent decrease. Refuse department receipts down by thirty-six per cent. There was a foot-note to this item to the effect that townspeople were now treating their refuse chemically for manure purposes, or, where there was no garden, were carrying it secretly down to the

river at night or up to the gravel-pits in the Upper Town. Tramway receipts were down forty-four per cent. The people of Siebenwasser now went on foot. Receipts from the town swimming bath were down nineteen per cent. The next item was the most painful for Schrader. He could hardly bear to look at it. Rent receipts from the new housing estate, down sixty-eight per cent. He had inaugurated the housing estate two months ago, and barely half the flats had been occupied then, and these fresh dismissals at Weber's had been a second set-back. Schrader considered. What times these were! You built, and brought the people out of their stuffy old homes and gave them dwellings where they had light and sun for their children, and suddenly the good you did them was turned to evil. They cursed the light, and longed to return to the darkness of the old courtyards. Schrader counted. Dispossession for non-payment of rent was threatened in nine cases. He would see that the ousters were not actually carried out. He would make a firm stand against such infamy. What did the finance committee recommend? Salary and wage cuts and the imposition of a new head-tax. That would mean another two hundred adherents for Dern, Schrader said to himself. You lowered the masses' incomes, you cast them on public relief—but oh! there were equal rights for all. Weber, the manufacturer, will pay the same percentage of tax as Krumm, his worker. Moreover, Herr Weber will not go to the seaside this year but will remain at home in his villa. Schrader shook his head. How easy it was to go astray in these terrible times! The thing to do was to start at the top. Confiscate all incomes over ten thousand marks. But that was contrary to the Constitution. One remarkable thing about our freedom, Schrader said to himself, is that it sets prosperity first.

He pushed the document to one side and thought of Bäuerle. How lucky he was at this moment. Up at Weissenfels the cherry and almond trees were in blossom. The vegetable fields were one stretch of green. Schrader opened the window. His beloved city lay in the sunshine before his eyes. The candles were out on the chestnut trees and the dome of the sky stretched over the river and far away. I shall go up to Weissenfels tomorrow, Schrader

said to himself, and to blazes with the finance committee and their report.

At that moment he caught sight of someone running across the square. The *Alarm!* The *Alarm!* he was shouting. He had a brown shirt on of course. No doubt this would be Dern's much heralded paper. It was astonishing the way people down there were buying the rag. It was going like hot cakes. Can it be a war? Schrader wondered.

He went back into the room and rang the bell. "Fetch one of those papers up," he asked the messenger. "Certainly, sir," said Kremmelbein, and went. Schrader lit a cigar. One must be armed.

Frau Nelly Schrader had spent the morning shopping. She had crossed the market-place. It had been pleasant to saunter among the flowers and the early vegetables. It was such a shame that her garden behind the old patrician house was so shady. Nothing but yew-trees and ivy thrived in it. All the manufacturers' wives had lovely villas on the sunny side, with garden terraces and vines and fruit-trees. But she lived in a nasty old palace with a wide stone staircase and magnificent metal-work on the banisters. I should prefer a nice little house with flowers, Nelly Schrader said to herself. Alfred is always in favour of everything modern, but he leaves his wife in an old tomb. But that's what men are always like—they dream about what's far away and don't see what's in front of their nose.

Nelly Schrader left the market. Behind her walked the excellent Kathinka, carrying the flowers and the vegetables she had bought.

There was a beautiful display of lambs' tongues at Hoffmann's. Some of those will be lovely with fresh peas, Nelly said to herself, and went into the shop. She bought two. Funny how embarrassed Herr Hoffmann was. He suddenly walked out of the shop, and the assistant served her. I expect the old boozer's got rheumatism in this spring weather. His sins are finding him out.

She and Kathinka walked to the Lower Town. Ah! there was Bringolf. How smart he looked. His suit was made of real English

material. If only Alfred could be persuaded to dress like that once in a way. Good gracious! Bringolf suddenly turned and walked into a tobacconist's. How very rude of him. She was positive he had seen her. The stage has given him a swollen head.

Nelly Schrader and Kathinka walked across the Bahnofplatz. There was some lovely Hungarian salami in Fischer's appetizing shop window. Nelly Schrader adored Hungarian salami. True, it was bad for the complexion. But just twice a month it didn't hurt. She started tripping across the square. Hallo, what was all this? Why were there so many people in the square at eleven o'clock in the morning? No train was leaving now. They all had newspapers in their hands and were reading them. They were reading and reading and not looking up. Had there been an accident?

Kathinka, what's that he's calling out? That Brownshirt over there! Dreadful, those young people! They give one no peace at all. What, the alarm? Is there a fire? By this time she had reached the Brownshirt. The boy's got a nice face. She took a fifty-pfennig piece from her bag. How much?

"I'll give *you* one for nothing," the lad in the brown shirt bawled out. What?

Nelly had the paper in her hands. She shrieked, but quite softly, like a bird. "Madam!" Kathinka called out. But Nelly had taken to her heels and was running away. She was running like mad towards the taxi-rank, holding the paper in front of her face. All the taxis had their hoods down, for it was spring. The sparrows twittered it from the roofs.

A taxi came up. People in the square were laughing. Nelly Schrader drove through Siebenwasser, the newspaper before her eyes, trying to hide herself as she rode through the bright, evil streets.

The mayor had lost all desire to work. This weather made him want to play truant, like a schoolboy. Kremmelbein didn't come back. Perhaps the fellow was hanging about the canteen downstairs, having a quick one. Let him. It was a lovely day. School's

over for the day. The irregular verbs of life shall be forgotten.

The mayor smiled. He was enjoying his levity. He lit his second cigar and leaned back in his chair, stretching his legs as though he were lying in a field and all were at peace with the world and with him.

Kremmelbein came back and said: "I couldn't get one, sir. They're all sold out." He was just going out again when Schrader called out "Stop! Did you go to the kiosk too?" "Sold out," muttered Kremmelbein. "Why are you so pale?" asked Schrader. But Kremmelbein had gone. Extraordinary, the fellow was trembling.

Bother this spring season. It knocked some men absolutely flat. Oh, you beloved, three-times accursed work. Schrader picked up the finance committee's report once more. It struck midday at St. Andrew's Church.

Schrader lifted the receiver. "Ask Dr. Kalahne to come to my office," he said. "What?" What was the woman whispering? "Louder, please!" Schrader called out. Dr. Kalahne had gone away. An hour ago. "And you tell me that now? The spring must have gone to your head. Idiot of a woman!" Oh, came the answer faintly, and then the connection was cut off.

Schrader threw away his cigar. Had they all gone mad? He lifted the receiver again. "Dr. Kalahne's house, please," he said. There was a buzzing, and then a voice said:

"Just a moment please, there is an incoming call for you."

"This is Dr. Wachtel speaking."

"Yes?"

"Come at once. Your wife—"

"What?" exclaimed the mayor.

"Hydrochloric acid," was the answer.

That evening there was an extraordinary meeting of the city council of Siebenwasser. A broken man stood before them.

"I knew nothing whatever about it," Alfred Schrader explained. "I gave the Hansa Stores the contract because they made the best bid. My wife bought the fur coat in pure carelessness and ignorance.

She bought it in order to give me pleasure. We have no private means, but she saves regularly out of the housekeeping money. She saw the coat in the fur department at the stores. It was offered for sale to all the world, and was marked as a bargain at two hundred and fifteen marks. The fur department sold it at a profit of forty per cent. Here is the evidence. It was bought for one hundred and thirty marks from the auction of Herr Stählin's property."

The town council, with the single exception of Dern, expressed their complete confidence in the mayor. Schrader insisted on resigning, and the debate lasted late into the night, but in the end Schrader gave way. Nelly would be an invalid for the rest of her life. Nothing remained but his duty.

From that day on, from twilight until early morning, there was always a man striding up and down outside Schrader's house. The man wore a fur coat turned inside out. Sometimes he danced under the arc-light.

With the summer there came fierce heat. It did not rain for weeks. Muffled thunder echoed down in the plain, like the sound of a distant battle. Fissures appeared in the dry and parching soil. A procession climbed to Mariapein, the little church above Erlenbach, praying aloud.

At Weissenfels they tried combating the situation without the help of God. Early in the morning, before the sun appeared over the wood, Hanns was in the fields with the farm-hands. They dug ditches to irrigate the vegetable beds. They put up sprayers. They laid long hoses along the cracking soil. But all their labour was in vain. The power of the sun was deadly. Everything dried up. The meadows turned grey. The grain fell from the stalk.

Bäuerle was shaken. The greater part of the harvest appeared to be lost. A whole year's outlay had been lost. He and Henrici hit upon an absurd plan. Bäuerle had once read in an article on the material damage caused by the World War that it was possible that bombardment had an influence upon atmospheric conditions; and the weather, as he pointed out to Henrici, was the result of

atmospheric disturbances. They mounted a kind of cannon, similar to the small guns with which the vine-cultivating peasants fight the hail, only heavier and with a steeper trajectory. They fired it whenever a cloud came over the hills. It was a senseless undertaking, a kind of heavenly alchemy. They very soon realized it, but, in the spirit of gamblers they went on with the game. "The American is threatening God," the peasants of Erlenbach remarked to one another when their sweltering midday peace was suddenly shattered by a loud explosion, and a white cloud of smoke mounted to heaven like a spray of pollen.

When Kilian Kern heard one of these explosions as he toiled up the hillside he always started convulsively. They reminded him of sounds he knew only too well. Not only the weather but the whole of humanity seemed to have gone completely mad. Not only had salaries and wages been cut and taxes increased, but at home his wife was expecting another child. Boom! There it was again. The fools wanted to shoot the weather down from the skies. Kilian Kern laughed. He didn't believe in heaven any more. He had left his faith, together with his leg, at Verdun. It was a hot day. He entered the Anheggers' farmyard and took an envelope from his pocket. "Official. Postage to be paid on delivery" was printed on it. Anhegger had to sign the receipt. He tore open the envelope and read the official document it contained. If he did not pay by the fifteenth, his farm would be sold at public auction. Anhegger turned blue in the face. He tore the piece of paper in two, crumpled it and flung it in Kilian's face. "Just you tell the bank Jews to come up here!" he shouted. "My gun's ready for them!" He left the postman standing there and went down to the cellar, where his cask of cherry brandy was. Kilian went hobbling on his way. He had two more letters in his pocket which had "Official. Postage to be paid on delivery," printed on the envelope.

Irene left Weissenfels after the midday meal. The heat was so great that it was impossible to work. Father was asleep. Henrici was resting on the lawn, and Fräulein Degerloch was sitting in

the kitchen, sipping coffee. How could that odd person stand it with her long sleeves, her high-necked blouse and her woollen petticoat? And on top of it all she insisted upon drinking hot coffee. Irene laughed. She was wearing wide trousers, a jumper and a bathing suit underneath.

It was not cool even in the wood. The leaves had actually started to fade. The soil was dry as straw. Irene walked between the trees. They were light beeches, slender and graceful. From the clearing the path turned off to the right. It led up a slope and through a thicket. Irene pushed back the blackberry branches. She ran up the little dyke. Before her lay the gentle curve of the lake.

The girl walked slowly past the pines to a small, sandy inlet. A long wooden plank, with a spring-board at the end of it, jutted far out into the water. She flung off her clothes and swam into the middle of the lake. Then she took hold of the raft, and swung herself up and down on the boards.

Irene did not know how long she lay there. She started dreaming. She dreamed of Uncle Baker, and of the tennis courts in Baltimore. She played a set with Frau von Berg, and Dr. Kalahne was the ball-boy. He wore a white jockey cap and white shorts, and during the intervals he had to fetch them ices and grape-fruit and every time he came up to their seat she said: "What does the little man say?" At that Kalahne put his hands on his hips and shouted: "Down! Down! Down!" Everybody laughed happily, and Irene was awakened by her own laughter. Everything looked red, and her tongue stuck slightly to her palate. She rested her head on her arms and watched a water-spider. Will he come? she wondered. I told him to come. He has been so shy the last few days. He's spent the whole time finding himself fresh work to do as an excuse. Now he's in the basement, straightening out the apple store-room. She had sat with him for two hours that morning and he had scarcely spoke a word. But when they kissed all his muscles suddenly tensed and for a second he seemed to want to crush her.

Irene shut her eyes. The water gurgled under the raft.

Hanns went on working in the store-room until three o'clock. He nailed more and more wooden stakes together. He hammered the nails in noisily. If three blows are enough to drive this one in, I'll go, he said to himself. One, two, three. The head of the nail still protruded one-sixteenth of an inch. Hanns breathed freely once more. He would not go.

But the game inside him started all over again. One, two, three. This time the nail went right in. Hanns flung the stakes down in a heap. For a whole minute he stood quite still. Then he picked up the hammer and once more the blows resounded through the basement.

I'll just tell her the truth, the plain truth, with no beating about the bush. Then she can get rid of me. One, two, three. But would she understand it? I don't understand that affair with Gerhard any more myself. But I must tell her. Some people think that sort of thing's an illness. He struck a furious blow with the hammer and the wood split.

Ten minutes later Hanns left the farm. His mind was made up. He was no coward.

Irene felt a sudden push. The raft swayed. It tipped sideways. It went over. Laughing and frightened, she rolled into the water. She went under and when she came up Hanns was swimming by her side. His hair was wet and hung right over his eyes. He blew like a sea-lion. She splashed him, and he dived under the water and seized her legs and pulled her down after him. They swam below the blue surface, like animals at play. Irene came to the surface first. She took a breathful of air, then, swimming the crawl, she made towards the shore. After ten strokes Hanns overtook her. He seized her and pulled her under again. They struggled in silence. Irene became aware that this performance had ceased to be play. She felt his body quite close to hers, and as they struggled underwater she felt his arms round her again and again. Several times they came to the surface, only to go down again after a short breathing space, continuing their amphibian love dance.

Eventually they swam ashore, exhausted. They lay in the sun but neither spoke. They lay there breathlessly, drying themselves in the sun.

They lay like this for a long time. Suddenly Hanns sat up with a jerk and stared hard at the water. He picked up some small stones and flung them into the lake; he took a switch and chased away a couple of water-hens which were moving among the rushes. Irene felt her heart beating hard. She looked up at a kite hovering in the sky. For a second, time stood still.

"I've got to tell you the truth," he said. His voice was quite hoarse. "Then you can do what you like with me."

How harshly he spoke and yet how beautiful the thought was.

"I'm not innocent any more. But there's something far worse I've got to tell you. Something far worse than that. I don't know what it's called."

He had turned away from her. She was aware of it, although she was looking up at the sky. Oh, Lord, if only he stays and doesn't run away!

"Now you know. Now you can despise me," he went on.

He was moving. He was standing up. She shut her eyes. She did not want to see it. Oh, keep him here, dear God, hold him fast!

She could not move. Everything in her wanted to go to him. But she could not move.

"It's something you don't understand, you see. I don't understand it myself any more. But it happened."

He was walking towards the lake. She heard him. She saw it through her closed eyelids. There he was standing. He was going to go away.

With a mighty effort Irene pulled herself up. She dug her hands behind her into the earth. She was trembling. She felt horribly cold.

"Hanns!" she called out. "Hanns! I knew it all the time."

He came back. She saw him, she saw his firm long legs. She sat there trembling.

"You knew?" He shouted at her.

"Yes, Angelika von Berg told me. She's jealous. She doesn't want

me to want you. But I do want you. I don't care about the other. I don't! I don't!" she screamed, hammering on the ground with her hands.

They looked at each other. Was that glass between them or only tears? He broke through the barrier between them. Heaven encompassed her. She felt she was about to die. She clasped Hanns in her arms and held him tight.

"Hanns!" she cried. "Hanns! My beloved!"

In the morning the peasant Anhegger had sent his wife and children to relatives at the other end of the village. Then he barricaded the door, closed all the shutters and sat down on the floor behind the opening in the roof. His ammunition, a hundred bullets, lay on a little board by his side. His rifle was in the corner, within reach. His revolver-sights were adjusted for long range. He had a supply of cherry brandy. And thus he waited.

Schnabel, the court bailiff, arrived in the village about eleven o'clock. Not a human being was in sight. All the shutters were closed. On account of the heat, of course, Schnabel said to himself. He felt rather uncomfortable, however. He could sense the hatred coming out to meet him. Before the war his job had been a fine one. He had taken it up eagerly after completing twelve years' service in the army. In his opinion it was a highly moral occupation—for did it not involve bringing retribution upon the defaulter and the good-for-nothings, upon all, in fact, who were the reverse of solid and respectable? The court bailiff was, so to speak, the right hand of justice. But now? Schnabel raised his straw hat. Thinking only makes you sick, he said to himself with a sigh, and went into the mayor's house.

The door of the office was locked. There was no sign of life anywhere. "Hallo!" Schnabel called out, banging on the wooden door with the hard rim of his hat. There was no answer. He went into the yard. There was no sound. The auction was due to begin in a half-hour and the mayor had actually gone away. This had never happened in Schnabel's experience before. True, he had gone through a great deal during this last year—yes, he could tell some

queer stories, he could—but for a mayor to neglect his duties in this fashion was utterly beyond his comprehension. After all, what was there in this disconsolate existence but one's duty? That was the only thing that kept you going, the only thing that made life worth living. Everything else was an idle waste of time—involving sheer flippancy and frivolity if not actual knavery. Schnabel listened. Wasn't that a door being opened upstairs? Surely that was someone moving. "Hallo!" Schnabel called out. "It's me!" He heard footsteps once more, heavy footsteps on the wooden floor.

Schnabel saw the mayor in the semi-darkness at the top of the stairs.

"Hallo! Good morning!" the bailiff called out, waving his hat. The peasant leaned over the banisters. He looked down calmly at the man in the alpaca uniform below. His mouth narrowed. When he opened it only a few teeth were to be seen.

"No," he said. "I'm not having anything to do with it!"

Schnabel was astonished. Drunk so early in the morning? he said to himself.

"No one in the village is going to have anything to do with it either. And if an outsider makes a bid . . ." the mayor spat on his hands and slashed the air with an invisible whip.

"That's all very well, but you're defying the law," said Schnabel.

"I know," said the mayor with a laugh. "But so far as I'm concerned this State can go to hell."

With that he slammed the door behind him, making pieces of plaster fall gently from the walls.

Schnabel stood in the passage. He was bereft of speech. Suddenly he felt cold, though it was the middle of July.

Anhegger sat like a bird of prey behind the opening under the roof. He had seen the enemy passing through the village. The man had actually gone to see the mayor. Anhegger laughed. No-one would come. Not a single person in the whole village would come, neither Catholic nor Protestant. They were one heart and one soul in this matter. No stranger was coming into this house. Anheggers had lived in this house for two hundred years, ever since

they emigrated from the Tyrol because of their faith. Why should this happen to him? Just because he hadn't paid that interest for eighteen months? He picked up his rifle and looked lovingly down the barrel. No, he said to himself with a smile. This isn't what we bargained for at all. Anhegger felt at peace. He knew perfectly well what he was doing. Anyone who laid a hand on his farm would get a bullet, even if he were the Emperor of China.

The peasant looked out into the glittering midday. He smiled. How wonderful his wife had been last night. She knew what was at stake. She had lain gently by his side, caressing him, this hard obstinate man.

It struck half-past eleven. The emissary of the State must surely be coming now. Just let him try to take my farm away. Anhegger cast a rapid glance down the street. There, sure enough, he was. He had an alpaca coat on, and a hard straw hat was on his perspiring head and he was preceded by a small, fat paunch.

Anhegger laughed. He put the bottle of cherry brandy to his lips. Now there's going to be some fun, he said to himself.

Schnabel walked straight towards the farm. He must first establish all the facts of the case, then telephone to his superiors at Siebenwasser. He did not like this affair in the least. But his duty forbade all private feelings. His duty was clear and he must carry it out, and that was that. He reached the gate. It was barricaded, of course. Was there no bell here? No. The next thing to do, Schnabel decided, was to demand admission in the prescribed manner. So he knocked. He banged with his fist. It did not sound very loud, but it must have been audible to the occupants. Either they were not at home or they purposely did not want to hear. Whichever it was, here was a clear case of obstruction of a State official in the performance of his duty.

Schnabel took a document from his pocket and started making notes. He stood in the brilliant sunshine outside the locked house, holding his portfolio between his legs.

Kilian Kern put Schnabel through to Siebenwasser. What was it the man was saying? Police? Importance of the State's authority

making itself felt? Absurd. They ought to leave Anhegger and his farm in peace. The banks had enough money as it was. Let them build palaces with it. They could put ten of Anhegger's house into one of them. This bailiff looked quite a decent fellow. Not at all evil and heartless, as he always imagined. The bailiff suddenly sniffed. He asked whether there were any rabbits about the place. "Of course," said Kilian, laughing. "I've got three big hutches behind the house." The bailiff beamed. "Oh," he said. "Please show them to me. I'm so fond of them. I've got two albinos at home, and two fine Belgians." They went out together and stood in front of the hutches. Schnabel picked a young one from its crowded hutch and laid it on his arm. He stroked the pale blue skin gently. The little creature happily pricked up its ears and started nibbling at Schnabel's wristwatch. Schnabel said: "Oh, look how affectionate it is."

Half an hour later three policemen arrived at the village. Sergeant Dorband met Schnabel at the post office. They decided to go to Anhegger's house and, if no one replied to their calls and knocks, to burst open the door.

Three uniformed men, accompanied by one man in a straw hat, walked down the empty village street. Once or twice Schnabel thought he saw eyes glinting at them through the cracks in the shutters, but he assured himself that it was only the glittering of the heat. Schnabel was no coward, but today he couldn't shake off this strange feeling about the knees.

Dorband knocked on the door twice. "Open!" he called out. "Police!" All was silence in the house. The village seemed bereft of life. Only a couple of ducks glided across the mill-stream.

The policemen looked at one another. All three had been peasant lads before they joined the army and later the police. They knew the obstinacy of the peasants, but there was something more than obstinacy here. Any man in Germany who did not open the door when the police demanded admittance was either a lunatic or a criminal. The three men grew angry. They were in uniform and the fellow didn't open the door.

"Open the door!" Dorband ordered. First they tried the lock,

but it was completely stuffed up with wooden wedges. One of them found an axe in front of a shed. Dorband had it brought. He tried it. He ran his finger along the edge, then raised it. A powerful blow descended on the door. Schnabel sprang to one side, startled. Like in enemy country, he said to himself. Dorband bit his lip and struck again. The left wing of the door bent slowly to one side. The sergeant raised the axe for the third time. The edge sparkled in the sunlight. Schnabel's hands and feet were trembling. The glittering metal cleft the air. Crack! There was a loud report. Dorband fell prostrate. The axe stuck in the wood. The sergeant lay in front of the door. He would never rise again.

The police fled like lightning behind the shed, bullets whistling round their ears. They returned the fire, shooting right past Schnabel, who stood staring down at Dorband, as if bewildered. "Take cover!" he heard someone shout. "What did you say?" the little fat man asked. His straw hat was still in his hand. Bullets whistled all round him. Suddenly the bailiff found his tongue. "Stop!" he shouted, holding his hands to his ears and rushing to the mill-stream. Crack! Crack! The bailiff was in the water right up to his waist. He was careful to hold the portfolio containing his papers well out of the water.

"Almighty God!" shrieked Schnabel. "Almighty God!"

The firing died away. Schnabel saw the policemen running down the road. He climbed up the bank, dripping wet, and ran after them. "Jew-lackey!" a voice from Anhegger's house roared after him. Then there was silence and the sky and the meadows were as lovely as they were before.

Anhegger had held his fire until the sergeant struck for the third time. Then he emptied his rifle. He saw Dorband fall. He had aimed at his left temple. He also sent a few shots from his revolver after the fleeing policemen before they disappeared behind the slope.

It was a shame, but Anhegger had not been able to help laughing when he saw the representative of the law standing in the mill-stream. The pitiful fellow with his portfolio and his light grey alpaca jacket! He had considered carefully whether or not to shoot

him in the backside, but the fellow made him laugh so much that he was scarcely able to shoot at all.

Anhegger sat on a seat behind the opening in the roof, his rifle on his knees. He picked up his tin can and drank some cherry brandy. He did not think at all. He just waited.

Twenty minutes later an armed detachment drove up to the post office. A pale officer jumped down. Twenty-five men gathered in the yard. The policemen breathlessly made their reports. Then Schnabel was sent for. He had been sitting upstairs in Kilian Kern's house, looking at the illustrated atlas with the children, gazing at the wonders of the world.

It was two o'clock when Anhegger noticed movements in the garden. A cordon of blue uniforms surrounded the house. Let them get on with it. No one will get past the steps outside my front door. Anhegger had the steps covered with his rifle. Suddenly he heard his name called out. He could not see the man to whom the voice belonged. He must be in the garden to the right, behind the copper-beech tree.

"Anhegger!" he heard. "Anhegger! Listen to this! Your house is surrounded. If you're willing to surrender, it may save you yet. Just you think it over, Anhegger, and be reasonable. Think it over carefully!"

Anhegger laughed. What? Parley with them? I've talked enough, and it wasn't any use. He fired a shot in the direction of the copper-beech tree. An answering volley was fired at the roof of Anhegger's house. The slates splintered and chips flew to the ground. But no bullet reached the place where the peasant was sitting. He had had this part walled in a year ago, to store sausages for the winter.

Now they were quiet again. Holding a council of war, no doubt. He heard them withdraw. Then suddenly he heard a noise. He stood up. A funny looking object was standing in the village street. Anhegger, former N.C.O. in the Eighty-third Regiment of Infantry decided that it was an armoured car. He felt perfectly calm, but his curiosity was roused.

Once more his name was called out.

"Josef!" Josef!"

He ran to his spy-hole. The priest was standing in the garden. Both his hands were raised, as though he were exorcising the house. Anhegger rested his rifle on the windowsill. This was obviously a ruse. It was what they always did. First they sent a priest and then—

"Shoot, if you want to," said the voice from the garden.

The peasant slowly raised his head.

"Josef, at five o'clock they are going to storm your house. You've got time till then. Think of your wife and children, Josef! Think of God!"

At that the peasant leaned over the ledge. "I want my rights!" he shouted. "Your justice isn't justice any longer. Earth is worth more than gold. That's what God thinks. Yes, that's what God thinks!"

"You have committed murder," the priest said softly. "Josef, you can no longer talk of God."

"And you come here thieving," the peasant shouted. "You can no longer talk of justice."

"Think of God's commandments. Submit yourself to those set over you. Think of your soul, man!" The priest looked sadly into the peasant's face.

"My house is in my soul," Anhegger said, quite calmly, "and they want to take it away."

Then he shut the window with a crash and fell back on a chair. Tears coursed unrestrainedly down his cheeks. But still he held the rifle firmly in his hand.

The priest walked back through the garden. His cheeks were pale. The unmilked cows moved restlessly in their stalls.

The hand on the church-tower clock approached five. The major had the armoured car ready in the village street. At five o'clock he would attack. Against murderers nothing but force was any use. No more lives were to be risked. The major proposed to bombard the roof till it caught fire. Let the lunatic burn to cinders.

Anhegger kept a sharp watch on the garden. He saw that time was getting on. They would be coming soon. Anhegger thought

no more of his wife and little Hänsli. He was in another world. He stood alone in his corner, marvellously alone, confronting rifles and bombs. This was how a man should be, upright and alone. Then thoughts started revolving in his head. If only he hadn't given his eldest daughter, who had married that town-ape of a schoolmaster, such a fine trousseau and such a fine dowry, he would never have needed the overdraft. But Liesel always wanted to fly high. He had paid out fifteen thousand marks, and that had been the cause of everything. But was he to give up his farm all because that asinine schoolmaster had speculated all the money away in two years? Why should he have to suffer for it?

What was this? The street was empty. The armoured car had gone. The peasant counted his ammunition. He had seventy-five bullets. It was going to be an expensive game for these gentry. He had laid one of them out already, and he would take careful aim until he aimed the last bullet at his own temple.

It was only twenty minutes to five. Anhegger heard the noise the cows were making. How they lowed. They had had no food since morning. They had not been milked. They bellowed in their anguish, for their udders were burning. The peasant held his hands to his ears, but he could not shut out the sound. To think that I should forget the most important thing of all! "Be quiet!" he shouted. He looked out the window. No one was coming. The village was asleep. Perhaps they had driven away. Oh, of course they had driven away. What a row the cattle were making. Josef Anhegger forgot all about the men.

He stared through his spy-hole. There were the stalls. The backs of the cows stood out high above the boxes. They were tearing at their ropes and stamping with their hoofs. Their bodies burned.

"God in heaven have mercy!" the peasant yelled. "Have mercy, O Lord!" he cried.

In a flash he was half-way down the stairs. He no longer saw anything. He forgot all about the priest, the armoured car, and the major. All he heard was the helpless, imploring, beseeching lowing of the cattle.

Anhegger dashed through the house. The pistol was in his hand.

He ran into the stall. How they lowed when they saw him. In a trice he was kneeling in the dung.

His fingers seized the burning udders. The white milk flowed through the straw, a stream released. The man ran from beast to beast. He laughed and cried. The cows licked his hair and the sap of their bodies came eddying and gushing over the murderer's hands.

The armoured car advanced slowly over the soft ground towards the house. The major stood among the bells in the church tower, observing the action from this point of vantage. Not a shot was fired as they advanced into the yard. The men went through all the rooms. Upstairs, under the roof, they found the rifle on the windowsill. They picked it up. They searched the cellar, the barn, the garden, the attic. They found him when they went into the cowshed. The pistol was still in his hand. He was covered with blood and dung, as though he had just been born.

CHAPTER VI

THE New World Inn at Siebenwasser was situated at number eleven, Topfengasse. A medium-sized hall with a stage adjoined the little tap-room. Before the war there was scarcely an evening when the hall was not engaged. Social-Democratic organizations, gymnastic clubs, choral societies, the cremation society, and the members of the co-operative society all met here, to the eminent satisfaction of Herr Petermann, mine host. Ever since his apprentice days he had been a convinced Social-Democrat, but this did not affect the smirk of satisfaction with which he contemplated his growing bank account at the end of each month. When the war ended and the Empire collapsed he sent his son to the university. His comrades' ostensible accession to power suddenly endowed the Petermann family with a county councillor. But this piece of good fortune was soon wiped out by a blow which made a huge hole in Petermann's purse. Shortly after the inflation the trades unions built their own premises and the various Social-Democratic organizations held all their meetings in it. Poor old Petermann scuttled along to see the trades union and party secretaries, but all he ever got was a few theatrical performances given by the cyclists' clubs or the cremation society. The place gradually declined to the level of a common public house. A picture of old Bebel, with his autograph signature, still hung over the bar, and behind the stage in the hall there stood a plaster-of-Paris figure of a young woman holding an olive branch, with the word "Liberty" written on the base. One day, while Frau Petermann was dusting, the ornament fell down. Frau Petermann swept up the dusty fragments.

"Well, you didn't outlive Wilhelm for long, did you?" she remarked as she shook the goddess's remains into the dust-bin.

Just a year had passed since Jürgen Winkler came to the New World Inn for the first time. It was only a few steps from Maria's house, and Maria liked drinking a glass of beer here on Sundays. At first Petermann laughed at the young man in uniform who kept company with "that woman," but one evening he said to his wife:

"Emmi, I think a bit of life's going to come back to the house."

Sure enough the place was filled every Saturday evening. At first the Brownshirt went about with five workers, then the number grew to twelve, and now there were sometimes as many as twenty of them. True, they did not drink much. Usually two men shared one glass of beer, for they were unemployed and most of them belonged to the Communist Party. It cut Old Petermann to the quick that these Muscovites should make themselves at home in his pub, but ten glasses of beer and twenty cigarettes in one evening were not to be sneezed at nowadays. Petermann couldn't understand what the Brownshirt was getting at at all. But when he went for the party chiefs and the trades union leaders the old innkeeper was secretly pleased. For when you looked at the faces of the party secretaries and delegates nowadays, and listened to their speeches there was no trace of the old courage and fighting spirit left. Instead of inflaming you with fiery ardour as of old, they merely pulled lists of statistics from their pockets and started reading them out. Petermann often looked at Bebel's picture. What have they made of your cause, August? Red tape, nothing but a lot of red tape. Thus he would apostrophize it and sigh, and mourn for the pride and defiance of May Day festivities back in the nineties.

One evening Maria was standing in front of the long mirror, combing her hair. It wasn't really necessary, and she was doing it because she was bored. Jürgen was out. When Jürgen was out Maria was bored.

Outside in the yard the children's games gradually ceased. She

could feel the evening wind gently blowing in through the window, bearing with it the fragrance of the elder tree and the late sweetness of the roses in the city gardens. Maria took a deep breath. How everything had changed. In the old days I never used to notice that kind of thing, she said to herself. The old days? That meant her life before the night she met Jürgen. And a drab, monotonous existence it had been. Things were different now. Maria picked up a small bottle of perfume and dabbed a little on her hair. Her whole being felt so tender on this warm August evening. She smoothed the bed. Tonight she would be Jürgen's. She wouldn't let anybody else in.

Maria sat on the bed. Her hands lay folded in her lap. The road to her happiness had been a long one. Her occupation was still the old one. People had started talking about it. She was keeping him. Of course she was keeping him. They had to live. And he had to fight and win. That was obvious enough, surely, but it was beyond the comprehension of the bourgeoisie. They took it for granted that new things always sprang from their brains. Oh, no, they didn't. They came from something quite different. They came out of the dark. Maria knew it and felt it. There was a secret surging in the air, under the ground and in the words of men. She did not know what it was. She was in love. Maria was aware of her body. She had known many men but loved none of them. That was the miracle Maria was experiencing. Hundreds may touch us, and afterwards we get up as though nothing had occurred. And then a man turns up who is different from all the others.

Maria scarcely ever thought of little Resi any more, and she never thought of her fiancé at all. She sent the child packets of sweets now and then and wrote to Jacob and told him everything was off. She didn't write unkindly, because she couldn't be unkind any more. She just told him to look out for another girl. She said it would be such a long time before they could get married that he had better not wait. He didn't answer. So much the better.

Maria heard footsteps down below in the yard. That must be the old Brumshagen woman. She's always spying around. What

was that? Somebody knocking? Yes, someone had actually knocked twice. Perhaps it was a schoolboy. Maria switched on the light and walked down the passage.

"Who is it?" she called out.

"It's me! Open the door, please, open the door!"

"Who is it?" asked Maria.

"It's Jacob, from Esslingen."

Maria felt dizzy. The walls seemed to close in on her as she stood in the passage.

"I'm out of work. I've got nothing to eat."

How faint his voice was. He sounded as though he were famished. Maria's head was in a whirl. What on earth was she to do? Supposing Jürgen came in when the man was there? Should she say he was her fiancé or just that he was a client? Or should she refuse to open the door? The man standing out there in the dark said nothing. He was hungry. There was bread and bacon in the kitchen.

She opened the door. She had to force herself to speak.

"Hallo, Jacob!" she said.

They sat down in the kitchen. Jacob drank three cups of coffee and ate four slices of bread and dripping. After that he felt better and was able to talk. "Yes," Maria said, after every sentence. "Yes."

How down-and-out he looked. A year ago he had looked such a smart sportsman, dressed in leather from head to foot.

". . . and when you wrote that time and said our engagement was off and that there was nothing doing so far as the inn at Wimpfen was concerned, and that we had better never see each other again and had finished with each other for good, really for good—I didn't mind a bit. I had a marvellous job then, Maria. I was agent for the whole of Franconia for a make of vacuum-cleaners."

The man was smiling like a child.

"And just think of it. I had a car and drove round the country in it. Every day I used to go somewhere else. I had a fixed commission and expenses. And I only called on better-class people too."

He licked the remnants of the dripping from his upper lip and cast furtive glances at the egg-box. Maria gave him an egg. He sucked it, and then he had another.

"Now, mind you, selling vacuum-cleaners isn't a job anybody can do. You've got to understand the business. Above all you've got to have a decent appearance and manners. It was lucky I went to a secondary school, I can tell you, if only because of all the educated expressions I learned."

He looked condescendingly at Maria, who hadn't been to a secondary school and always said concentrated milk instead of condensed milk.

"That was a life, Maria. Here, there and everywhere and pots and pots of money."

"And what's happened to the money? I mean, what have you done with it?" Maria asked.

Jacob looked at her in astonishment.

"Spent it, of course! What on earth do you expect?"

He shook his head sadly. What extraordinary ideas women had!

"And what happened next?"

"Suddenly it all came to an end."

For a long time they sat in silence. If only he would go, Maria said to herself. Jürgen mustn't see him. No, Jürgen mustn't see him. He actually tried to hold her hand. He stroked it. He came and sat quite close to her.

"We were fond of each other, weren't we?" he said. "We loved each other, didn't we? We were going to rent an inn together, weren't we? As soon as I was in low water I suddenly felt I loved you again, Maria. So just you go back to your old sweetheart, I said to myself, she must have put a little money on one side, and even if it isn't enough for an inn, perhaps it'll be enough to rent a little tobacconist's shop."

She looked at him; poor Jacob, cringing, picking his finger-nails, hunching his shoulders, twitching his eyes. He whispered with a grin:

"You know very well I'll keep my eyes shut. As long as the gentlemen pay it's all right with me. I'll sell cigars and you'll—"

"Shut up!" Maria screamed. She rose and stood in front of him. She took him by the shoulders and shook him. "Keep your mouth shut!" she shrieked. The vacuum-cleaner salesman's eyes grew round and big. What was the matter with the woman? Had she gone mad? She suddenly burst into tears. Could she be out of work too?

The minutes passed slowly. Neither looked at the other. The tears dried on Maria's cheeks. Jacob kept on stuffing pieces of bread in his mouth.

Suddenly the woman got up and went into the next room. She fetched her bag. She looked at him as if from a distance.

"You can't stay here," Maria said. "I've got a rich lover. He's very jealous." Maria lied. "There. I can't give you any more."

Jacob mechanically took the fifty-mark note.

"I see," he said. "What am I to do now?"

He stood before her in the faded elegance of his suit, gazing at a rent in the upper of his shoe.

"Isn't your mother still alive?" Maria asked, aware of how sorry she was for him.

The man smiled, as at a sudden happy memory.

"No," he said.

Maria went on sitting in the kitchen for a long time, alone. She had given him three apples besides the fifty marks, and she had dashed into Jürgen's room to find him some cigarettes. And now he was gone. He had walked out of the door like a ghost. Might he write to her? He would certainly repay the fifty marks when he found a job. With my education and my manners, I'm sure to find something. That had been intended as a dig at Maria. Oh, how helpless he was in his blustering.

She considered whether to have a meal now or not. Jürgen was going to be late. The whole S.A. had been called out. Something was up. Since that Dr. Kalahne had publicly joined the Party things had been going with a hum. What brains the man had! That idea of having a man parading outside Schrader's house with a fur coat on had been splendid. It had nearly driven the mayor mad. Served

him right. Who ate from the hand of the Jews died of it. Maria laughed. Her master and mistress at Darmstadt had been Jewish too. There, now you see what happens, Maria said to herself. She had forgotten all about Jacob. She scrambled two eggs for herself. She was hungry. She ate her eggs, looking forward to Jürgen.

Nine o'clock came, then ten o'clock. Maria sat in the kitchen alone. Several times she heard tapping on the shutters, but she did not open the door. Today was Saturday. She was going to Petermann's pub with Jürgen. She would have a glass of beer and listen quietly to the arguing men. No one could hold his own with Jürgen. When he started talking there were fireworks. The other day a workman brought a book along with him and said it contained the real truth, but when he started reading out of it, it contained nothing but sentences a mile long and a lot of foreign words.

For five minutes Jürgen put up with it. Then he burst out laughing. "My lads!" he called out. "Why bother your heads with this Jewish rigmarole which nobody can understand? True Socialism isn't in books, it's in your hearts!"

How they all stared at him. They all grew quite tongue-tied. One of them took out his membership card and handed it to Jürgen. How happy Jürgen was when a worker came over to the Party. "No one but you can build the Realm!" he would shout in their faces. "No one but you and the peasants can build the Realm! The middle classes are done for!" It was at these times that Maria loved him best. He glowed with enthusiasm. He was so brave. He was afraid of nobody.

Maria pricked up her ears. She heard footsteps in the street, firm footsteps, nailed boots. Now she could hear the voices. Yes, it was he. The door banged downstairs. Here he came, running up the stairs. He was singing. He really was singing. *"German Socialists, bravely hand in hand*—Maria!" he called out. "Maria!" She jumped to her feet and ran into the passage. There he was, standing right under the light. He was laughing. He was radiant. "He's coming! He's coming!" he shouted. "He's coming in three days' time!"

"Who's coming?" Maria asked.

"Adolf Hitler!" Jürgen shouted joyfully, and she felt his firm embrace.

During all these weeks Johann Kaspar had not left his estate. Rain had fallen late. The fields had recovered. The corn had given a moderate yield. Two-thirds of the vegetables had been spoiled. But the vines were heavy with fine grapes. These were Bäuerle's hope. Something must thrive after this fearful summer. It seemed to be under a spell. On top of everything else, the company that had been formed to finance the housing scheme had failed. Johann Kaspar was in it for eighty thousand marks. He knew quite well that he would never see any of his money back, and, though it did not affect him deeply he was annoyed. The Schrader affair had been far worse. True, outwardly a scandal had been averted, but actually the thing had left a trail of mistrust, envy and suspicion in its wake. That, of course, was exactly what it had been intended to do. I'd have treated that fellow Kalahne differently, Bäuerle said to himself, but all Schrader did was to give him formal notice instead of kicking him head over heels downstairs. It was obvious that all the threads led back to him. It was he who instigated that Schickedanz person to pursuing Schrader's second housemaid until she stole the receipt.

Johann Kaspar walked angrily through the vineyards. He touched a grape. It was warm from the sunshine. Here's something clean at any rate, the American said to himself, crushing it between his fingers.

He wanted to cast the whole thing from his mind. The stuff that that fellow Kalahne wrote in his *Alarm* every day exceeded all limits. Socialism was a way of looking at things, Kalahne wrote. Socialism was not tied to material ends, and was in fact superior to material things altogether. And so on. Have Socialism in your hearts. It was enough to drive one to despair. Johann Kaspar was no Socialist. But he knew what Socialism was about. Socialism was concerned with very practical things indeed. It was concerned with a planned, world-wide economy. It was concerned with coal and iron and electricity and credit and factories and ships. It was

concerned with all sorts of practical things. If you wanted Socialism it was with these practical things that you had to start. Socialism was a matter of brains and fists. But hearts? Hearts indeed! Bäuerle started swearing. This species of mental aberration, this wrong thinking, arrogant with the arrogance of all wrong thinking, infuriated him. How cunningly these Prussians disguised their true intentions! They were quite ready to twist the letter A into the letter O. Now they were at loggerheads with Socialism. Now they were making the nineteenth century out to be contemptible. Ha! Ha! my fine fellows, that's a dangerous game. In the nineteenth century they at least thought clearly.

Johann Kaspar was very angry. Here he was in his own beloved home, in the midst of his vineyards, strong, healthy and willing, and once more he had to watch the Germans going hopelessly astray. True, for years after the war, they had been badly treated; for years they had lived in a state of inferiority. But had they not seemed to be set on the right path? Had they not seemed to be called upon precisely because they had suffered so much, to be the first to overcome the nationalistic illusions that had been the bane of Europe for a hundred fifty years? Bäuerle was grieved. He loved his people. That was why he grieved.

The midday bell rang from the estate. Johann Kaspar plodded slowly through the vineyards. His eyes took in the grapes glinting in the sunshine and the fine, pure light of heaven encompassed the restless, angry man.

Braised mutton and carrots, with the light, slightly bitter wine of the country. Bäuerle forgot his troubles and sat down, comfortably stretching his feet and his heavy boots far out under the table. The fragrance of the nourishing meat arose pleasantly from the plates and the wine swung gently in the glasses. The river flowed through the vineyards below and far away on the horizon the silvery plain glistened. Bäuerle raised his arms, folded them behind his head and exclaimed:

"Oh, children, how wonderful all this could be!!"

Irene and Hanns sat quietly at table. They looked at Johann

Kaspar and nodded. Then they looked once more into each other's eyes. Irene peeled Hanns a pear. She cut the soft fruit into four equal parts, and the juice ran over her hands and the black core stood out against her skin.

"Why don't you talk?" Bäuerle asked after an interval.

Irene raised her head in astonishment. "Why on earth should we talk?" she asked, and her eyes grew big and round.

Bäuerle silently took a nut and cracked it in the palm of his hand.

In the afternoon he drove down to Siebenwasser. He had some business to attend to at the bank. Weissenfels was an expensive dream. The Baltimore factories were earning little. Bäuerle had to be careful.

He went into Henri Jockel's for a snack. Half a bottle of Macon put him in a good mood. The wine-room was empty. Frau Minchen came to his table for a talk.

"Hennree has dashed off to Frankfurt. Herr Hitler is speaking there."

"Don't talk to me about it," Bäuerle exclaimed. "Isn't there anything left at all in this country except Hitler?"

"Well," Frau Minchen said, "he's certainly the great attraction at the moment. Just think of it, he wants to change everything!"

"And then?" asked Bäuerle.

"Well, then everything will be better."

Bäuerle had a drink.

"As I always said to Hennree, you and your democracy, I said, it only leads to quarrelling and confusion. Everybody pulls different ways. But he always shouted at me and said I didn't understand such things. That's just what freedom is, he said. Freedom, just think of it! It wouldn't suit us Germans at all. Why, as soon as three Germans get together they form a club. Isn't that so? There's got to be somebody in command. That's only common sense, isn't it?"

Frau Minchen was well away. For a long time she had been reading the Munich newspapers in secret. She used to buy them at the station and make a detour across the fields and throw them

away when she had finished with them to prevent Henri from noticing anything. For the dear democrat could be as angry as a bull. Bäuerle was another of them. Freedom, indeed! Minchen said to herself. What do we get out of it? Nothing but worry and business going from bad to worse.

She planked a newspaper down in front of Bäuerle's face. She liked Bäuerle and wanted to tease him.

"Herr Hitler's coming here, you know. Look, it says so in the paper. He's coming on Friday. You must certainly go and see him."

The woman chatters such nice Hamburg German. Let her say whatever she likes, Bäuerle growled to himself.

"And just look what Herr Dern writes here. Mind you, I don't agree with everything he says. I think what he says about the Jews is exaggerated. When I was at boarding school, there was a Fräulein Goldschmidt there, such a nice girl. But what Herr Dern writes here—"

She started reading aloud from the *Alarm*.

"'We are not a party. We are not a sectional group. We are turning the wheel of German history. Nordic man—'"

"Please be quiet!" exclaimed Bäuerle. "When I think of that fellow Dern's face—"

"Oh," Frau Minchen said, "there's still a good deal of the East Prussian about him, of course."

Bäuerle rose, picked up his hat and walked out, completely forgetting to pay his bill.

Things were running high at Petermann's pub. The Brownshirt had arrived late, about eleven o'clock, and with him at least ten men, also in uniform. Dear me, Petermann said to himself, surely I know that man sitting next to Winkler. Last week he was still in mufti. And so was that one too. They both used to be raving Communists. And now? Petermann scratched his head. He didn't know what to think. Socialism was an insoluble enigma. In the old days the whole thing had been perfectly clear and straightforward. There had been the Social-Democratic Party and that

was that. But since the Social-Democrats had come into power and started building their People's Halls and so forth Socialism seemed to have gone a-roaming. The Brownshirts and the Reds both claimed to speak in the name of Socialism, or so they said, and the Social-Democrats had given up saying anything at all. Too many cooks spoil the broth, Petermann decided.

Apart from the men in uniform no one was in the pub. Oh, yes, there was. A man was sitting over there in the corner. He had been there for two hours and had drunk six beers and six brandies. If only he pays up and doesn't make any trouble.

Father Petermann poured out the beer, wiped the froth from the glasses and took them to the table where the Brownshirts were sitting.

"Well?" he said. "No arguments tonight? All of the same opinion?"

They laughed and nodded their heads.

"Strange!" said Petermann. "Can such a thing be?"

He put the beer down on the table.

"That's the marvel of it," he heard Winkler say. "You can't understand it without experiencing it."

How solemn they look, Petermann said to himself. He shuffled back to the bar.

Jürgen felt solemn indeed. Tomorrow he was going to see the Leader. He was going to present to the Leader the fine young proletarians whom he had saved from the slough of materialism. And sturdy, solid fellows they were, not at all easy to bring over. Ten of them were worth more than a thousand spineless members of the bourgeoisie. Jürgen looked proudly at the men in their new uniforms. These men were going to stand in front with him tomorrow, when the Leader dedicated the standards after the meeting on Erlenbach Height. Before getting his own way, he had had a long struggle with Hungrich, that hater of the working classes, whose ambition was to make of the S.A. an association of armed bourgeois. Kalahne had backed Jürgen. The doctor, crafty though he was, knew that Socialism and nothing else was at stake.

The men sitting round the table did not talk much. They drank

their beer, which was at Maria's expense. There was no more arguing. They were soldiers now. There was someone to do the thinking for them now.

Jürgen looked at Maria. She looked neat in her white blouse and blue skirt. What was the matter with her this evening? She was shifting about in her chair like a fidgety schoolgirl. Jürgen didn't beat about the bush, particularly where Maria was concerned.

"Come, speak up, why are you trembling like that?"

"I'll be all right in a few minutes," she said.

Jürgen followed her glance. The way that fellow in the corner was grimacing across at her was really disgraceful. I'll go and . . . He rose to his feet. Maria held him back.

"No," she said. "Leave him alone."

"What's the matter?" two of the S.A. men asked. I certainly mustn't be sentimental now, Maria said to herself, these men don't understand it. She leaned her bright arms on the table. She curled her lip and stuck her nose in the air. "Boys," she said, "do you know what it's like to see a corpse out of one's past life? That's my cast-off fiancé over there."

The S.A. men laughed. This was what Maria had to be like—cheeky and outspoken. This was how they liked her.

"Came back to fetch the pants he left behind him, did he?" one of them called out. They all grinned at Jacob. He was sipping another brandy, and behaved as if he did not hear them. He went on grinning.

"Just you look down at your glass or at your finger-nails, if you don't mind!" shouted Jürgen. He found the fellow most objectionable. He seemed to be a real toad. He had known it as soon as Maria told him the story of the tobacconist's.

"I can look where I like," said Jacob, looking through his hands as if they were field-glasses. "So that's your rich lover, is it, Maria darling?" he called out, chuckling. "So those are the savages you spend your sinful money on, are they? And turn your old friends away with a fifty-mark note? Oh, well, whores and rowdies always did go together!"

"Leave him alone, he's drunk!" Maria shrieked, holding Jürgen's

sleeve. But Jürgen tore himself free and went over to Jacob's table. The S.A. men had jumped to their feet and loosened their leather shoulder-straps. Their faces were set and earnest, as though this were a solemn occasion.

Jürgen put his hand on Jacob's shoulder and pointed silently to the door. "A double brandy," Jacob called out towards the bar. He turned his back on Jürgen, folded his arms and said:

"I'm an educated man! I don't talk to people like you!"

A blow on the back of the neck sent him sprawling across the table. He was up again in a flash. "You pimp! you whoremaster!" he yelled, seizing a chair and swinging it over his head. At that they fell on him. The chair fell to the ground with a crash. Jacob felt himself attacked from all sides. Blows and kicks rained down on him, his arms and legs were held fast, he could not defend himself. But he could shout. He went on shouting till everything went black before his eyes. "Cowardly dogs! Cowardly dogs! Cowardly do—"

When he opened his eyes Petermann was kneeling by his side with a cup of brandy. Jacob tried to get up. "Lie still, man, lie still, for heaven's sake! They've all gone. What a state of affairs! Dear me!" Jacob sat up. He rose to his knees. He felt his ribs. The small of his back hurt badly. What a liar the woman was, keeping the fellow and behaving as though he were the Shah of Persia.

He shook the dust from his coat, still kneeling, gloomily contemplating its faded elegance and swearing quietly to himself. Suddenly he noticed a dark object lying on the floor next to the table-leg. He picked it up, hesitated a few moments, and then, quick as lightning, slipped it in his pocket. Then he got up and went over to the bar. The thing in his pocket was a Browning. He drank three more beers and three more brandies. He invited Petermann to join him. The fright had made Petermann thirsty. He anxiously implored Jacob not to tell the police. Jacob was completely fuddled.

"What?" he exclaimed with infinite scorn. "I tell the police? A man in my position defends his honour himself!"

He flung the fifty-mark note down on the table. Petermann,

terror-stricken, gave him his change. The gentleman looked rather down-at-heel, it is true, but more might be in this than met the eye. In these times you could never tell. Jacob put on his hat and rolled drunkenly over towards the door. He opened it, and the warm night air flooded the room. Jacob turned round.

"And let me tell you that in future I only frequent respectable places!" he shouted and went out.

The stormtroop met in a deserted gravel pit outside Siebenwasser. Detachments started arriving from ten o'clock onwards. Soon the gravel pit and the harvested fields round about were filled with groups of S.A. men. They came marching in from all over the country, from the villages up in the hills, the townships by the river, the hamlets and the market towns. Soon more than a thousand men had gathered outside Siebenwasser. Hungrich was standing proudly on the slope. He felt like a general. Just look how Lieutenant Träger's little stormtroop has grown during the last few months! Hungrich could not help smiling when he thought of their ridiculous parades a year ago. Now they were a power in the land. Down by the river there was a detachment of a hundred police, but never mind. These men before him now would live to see the day when Germany belonged to them. Jürgen came and reported one thousand one hundred eighty men. That was the strength of a Standard, Hungrich said to himself. Tomorrow he would be a Standard-leader. He walked along the ranks and greeted the men. More than once he was on the brink of slipping into his old sergeant-major style, but the thought that this was not the old army saved him just in time. That fellow Winkler with his proletarian mannerisms kept his eyes wide open. They liked him, and he was in good odour in Munich, because of his connection with Gerhard Träger. At the moment the workers were held in high regard. A man who brought over one worker was more esteemed than one who brought over ten others. Hungrich had always had nothing but contempt for the working class. His father had been a locksmith. He remained an independent artisan until the factories came, and then he became a foreman. But he never forgot

the days of his independence. He kept himself proudly and disdainfully aloof from the other workers. There was always an injured tone in his voice. He sounded as though he were the victim of a terrible injustice. His son learned at an early age that it was a disgrace to be a workman and that the chief duty of man was to rise from that humble estate and become a member of the middle class. Old Hungrich neither drank nor smoked, and at home they seldom ate meat, all to pay for the son's schooling and training for his job. Out of the mire! was the Hungrichs' watchword, and by the mire they meant the working class. In their eyes working-class life not only bore the stigma of pauperdom but was tainted with indecency as well. The son perpetuated this point of view. In 1918, when the party of the working class ostensibly took over power, he enlisted in the Volunteer Corps and fought in Central Germany and on the Ruhr. At the Leuna works he shot down a Spartacist from two yards' range as though he were avenging his father and the shame thrust upon his family. He joined Adolf Hitler's Movement in the belief that it was preparing a decisive blow at the proletariat. Hungrich bluntly denounced the eight-hour day as a disgrace. In his opinion the workers were paid far too well, and the fact that they had the right to vote just like decent people infuriated him. He regarded the working class purely and simply as inferior human beings, and now he had to swallow the fact that during the last few weeks the Nazi Movement had started setting great store by them. The talk was all of the workers' hands and brains, and one did not mention the word "bourgeois" without pulling a wry face. In the S.A. they actually spoke openly of a Socialist revolution. Naturally Hungrich explained all this away on tactical grounds, but he could not conceal from himself the fact that there were people high in the Movement who looked forward to seizing the factories, the banks and the mines on the day they came into power—just the reverse, in fact, of what one had enlisted for. This Jürgen Winkler, for instance, believed firmly that capitalism must be overthrown. He laughed heartily at anyone who doubted that the overthrow of capitalism was the Movement's real aim.

Hungrich walked slowly down the ranks. He talked to some of the men, and he was asked excited questions about exactly what time the Leader was coming. He cracked jokes about the police, who were gazing across at them, bored, and finally he sampled the soup which was being cooked behind the barracks. At the edge of the gravel pit Jürgen presented the ten workers whom, as he put it, he had brought back to their people. Hungrich felt thoroughly embarrassed. Yes, they were real proletarians all right. They had real proletarian faces—lean, slightly caustic and remarkably self-possessed. Hungrich looked them up and down. They wore laced boots, long stockings, corduroy breeches and brown shirts.

"Party-Comrade Winkler, really you might have dressed these men a little better."

What was the matter? Why did they stare at him like this? Winkler had gone scarlet in the face. What was this he was saying?

"These men, as you call them, are Party-comrades like you and me. And I couldn't dress them either. Every single one of them saved money from his dole to buy his brown shirt. In my opinion that's worth more than the smartest uniform money can buy!"

Hungrich became acutely aware of the glances directed at his smart top boots, and he felt uneasy in his elegantly-cut breeches. He managed to stammer out something about a misunderstanding and his admiration and so on, and then he passed on. Jürgen turned to the workers.

"If the Leader had heard that," he said, "Hungrich would be out of the Party like a shot!"

The workers were delighted. Never in their lives before had they known a subordinate to reprimand a superior and seen the latter slink off with his tail between his legs.

Hanns soon left the groups of S.A. men and lay down in a meadow above the gravel pit. It was quiet here, and there was no need to talk, and one was alone. Yesterday evening, after receiving his stormtroop orders, he had dutifully got his things ready, and

he had thought no more about it until this morning. He had played chess with Irene until ten o'clock. It had been remarkable how each had given the other chances to win. After the game they went into the garden. Irene wanted to see whether the water-lilies closed their petals at night, and sure enough they did. It had been a wonderful hour. Nothing was stirring. They did not speak. But how much they said. Later, when they returned, Bäuerle asked them where they had been and Irene lied and said they had been chasing fireflies. She said that in the end, after a lot of trouble, they had actually managed to catch one, but that all they found where the lovely light had been was a nasty worm. Johann Kaspar looked at them strangely, and said they should never forget the story of the lovely light and the ugly worm. But they did not understand what he meant. What he said was outside their sphere altogether. When Hanns said good night to Irene in the passage she whispered in his ear that her father was going to spend the following night in Siebenwasser, because of the meeting. Then she ran hurriedly away. But he understood.

Hanns was lying on his back in the grass, talking to himself. What is the matter with you, Hanns Diefenbach? What has become of you? There was a Hanns Diefenbach once. Is he dead? Have you forgotten everything, Hanns? Holzapfel, Gerhard, your comrades? And today the Leader is coming and here you lie in the grass staring up into the sky. You're not even looking forward to it, nor are you walking up and down in excited expectation. No, you're watching a bumble-bee, stupid little thing, burrowing into a flower and getting itself covered with pollen. And you actually would have preferred not to have left Weissenfels at all this morning, because the nuts are ripe and Irene has got her hands all yellow from the shells and you wanted to climb that tree again, right up to the top, where it sways. Hanns, you're a deserter, a petticoat-chaser, a lost soul.

There he lay, pulling a blade of grass through his lips. He looked at the small white clouds on the horizon and the bright façade of Weissenfels on the hill above. Go on talking, he said to himself, go on talking. But he did not go on talking. Suddenly he felt

quite quiet and peaceful. He shut his eyes and listened to the bumble-bee. Ants walked across his hands. The warm wind stirred his hair. The fragrance of the meadow, the scent of a thousand flowers hovered about him. Hanns stretched himself. He took a deep breath. A smile was on his face. He fell asleep.

The thousand men down below in the gravel pit did not see the angel. But Hanns saw him. First he saw the chaffinches flying towards him, chattering, and then the bumble-bees and the ants bestirred themselves, and the dragon-flies and the grasshoppers, the butterflies and the gold-green beetles, the lizards, the frogs and the salamanders. Last of all there came the swallows, flying in perfect formation, in the shape of a half-moon. Hanns looked at the angel. His armour was of the hard steel of night, but his legs shone with light. In his left hand he carried a growing vine, and the chaffinches and tomtits nestled in his right hand. They whistled and trilled and wiped their little beaks on their breasts, while the ants carried stones and twigs to the angel's feet and the dragon-flies hovered behind him and weaved him a mantle of green grass.

"Look! Look! Look at the angel!" Hanns called out, but the men in the gravel pit did not see the angel.

Hanns saw the angel's face. It was a face of painful beauty. Hanns was not afraid.

"Who are you?" he asked the angel.

"I do not know," the angel answered, and knelt. The flowers in the field suddenly started growing all round him to keep him warm. And as the flowers grew swarms of bees came flying from the woods and gave them back their honey, so that the angel might not go hungry. And while the bees were returning their honey, gold-green insects started whirring their wings, making a wonderful gentle light, so that the angel might not stumble. And while the gold-green beetles were whirring their wings, butterflies started dancing over his head and the frogs started leaping and jumping in the grass to prevent the angel from feeling sad. And the butterflies danced above his head and the frogs leapt before his feet and the gold-green insects whirred their wings and the bees gave back

their honey and the flowers entwined themselves about his armour. But in spite of it all the angel wept.

"Why are you weeping?" Hanns asked.

"Listen," the angel said, and everything grew still.

Then a roaring as of an angry wind burst upon the air. The sky darkened, black clouds descended, and the angel grew pale. "Stop!" Hanns shouted. "Stop!" He tried to stand up, but his limbs refused to move. And he saw dense masses of people in the clouds, their white bodies enveloped in cloths. They were running against one another, striking and strangling and biting one another in the breast. And their blood flowed down to the earth in bright streams. "Stop!" Hanns shouted. "Look! Look at the angel!" But they did not hear him. And suddenly Hanns saw the butterflies fall to the ground, and the frogs started eating the dragon-flies and the bees took their honey back again and the ants started fighting among themselves. And there was no end to the crying and the uproar between heaven and earth. The angel disappeared.

"Stop!" Hanns shrieked. "Stop!" He felt hands seizing him, shaking him. "Wake up, man!" Jürgen shouted. "Wake up!" They pulled him to his feet. Hanns opened his eyes. The gravel pit was empty. The men were standing in the roadway, drawn up in ranks. "Double march!" Jürgen shouted. As they reached the main road they heard the horn of a car from Erlenbach.

Frau Dern was in her kitchen, shaking her head. She gave the whole thing up as a bad job. For the past three days the whole house had been in an uproar. People had been coming in and going out day and night. It had been absolutely impossible to speak to Otto at all. That Dr. Kalahne was the only sensible one among them. At least he had told her what to cook. Pancakes with apple sauce, he said. At first this had left Frau Dern absolutely speechless. She had thought out a marvellous menu, just like the one at her wedding. Oxtail soup she had decided on, and trout, and fillet of beef, with several vegetables, followed by ices and cheese; and Moselle with the fish, red Palatinate wine with the meat and good strong coffee, with cherry brandy to follow.

Frau Dern prepared the pancakes. She sprinkled a teaspoonful of vanilla sugar over the mixture, put the dish on one side and went out into the corridor. She went into the spare-room. She had cleaned it out and made the bed herself. Two high pillows were at the head of the bed. She had inherited them from her grandmother. They were filled with down, and so was the mattress. Those were the times, Frau Dern said to herself. Things were substantial then. She tested the bed-lamp. How pretty the red and green beads looked in the light. In the evening she would put an apple by the bedside, and a small glass of brandy with a piece of sugar beside it. Real French brandy. She still had some left from her silver wedding, and she had hidden it from Otto in the linen cupboard. But suddenly she had a disheartening thought. It made her feel quite sad. She wouldn't be able to offer him the brandy, though it was the best she had. Mother Dern so much wanted to do her best. Thoughtfully she stroked the feather-bed. A smile of relief passed over her face. "Even if he only eats pancakes, at least he'll sleep soft!" she murmured.

When she went back to the kitchen she found Hertha Diefenbach there. Mother Dern bade her a friendly good morning. She was no longer jealous of his soul-mate, as Otto called the captain's widow. She understood Otto very well. Mother Dern was forty-eight, and she had had three children and two miscarriages and her education hadn't gone far, and you couldn't really blame a man like Otto. Of course, so long as Otto was still at the post office and came home from work in a bad temper, every evening she was still the right woman for him. But now Otto's name was in the papers, and many made a hero of him and many hated him too. But Otto would get the better of them—trample them down, he always said, laughing loudly at the same time. Mother Dern couldn't join him in that. Many years ago she had loved Otto, but now he had grown beyond her. She had remained in the kitchen. What she liked best was sitting in the kitchen, thinking of the time when Otto had been a jolly young fellow who used to blow the bugle so impressively. One thing, however, Mother Dern was seriously worried about. Oh, no, she didn't tell anyone about

it, not she. She'd be careful and keep her mouth shut, she would. But Otto didn't believe in God any more. He called Our Lord Jesus a Jew, and the apostles idle good-for-nothings. And he talked about the sun as if the sun were Our Lord. Like savages, Mother Dern thought, and she often went secretly to Mass and prayed for Otto's soul.

"They're coming!" Hertha Diefenbach called out. "They've just telephoned from Erlenbach." How the woman was trembling. Her lips were dry and her eyes like glowing coals. "All right," said Mother Dern. "Then I'll make the pancakes."

But the Diefenbach woman had vanished. She had dashed into the garden. There was a huge uproar in the town. Heil! Heil! Heil! Police rode by the house. Heil! How the shouting grew. You could no longer hear your own voice above the din. Now they were in the market-place, now they were in the Old Town. Now they were here. The wind stopped. The sun stood still. HEEEIIIL!!!

Mother Dern put the pan on the fire, shaking her head. The fat sizzled. The first pancake was just ready when the men walked into the house.

Bäuerle was sitting in the midst of the frenzy, resting his head on the handle of his stick, looking neither to the right nor to the left, but staring down at the floor. He was trying his hardest to understand what was happening, but without success. The man on the platform had only to open his mouth and the people roared themselves hoarse. Just listen to that. A burst of cheering started in the gallery, was taken up in the body of the hall and the wave swelled to an ear-splitting clamour. Who could stand up to that? Bäuerle listened intently. The voice was fantastic. The way he modulated it was marvellous. How suggestively he put his questions, how cunningly he emphasized the pauses, intensifying the excitement. Never in his life had Bäuerle heard such oratory. It broke over you like a thunderstorm. The man was . . . Heil! Heil! HEIL!! . . . a natural phenomenon. . . . Hang them! Hang them! . . . The man had suddenly started talking like a

child . . . Germany . . . Fatherland . . . the people . . . Love. . . . A woman was sobbing, quite loudly, without restraint. . . . Our dead . . . the crowd was reduced to the verge of tears. Bäuerle felt tears rising himself. Why? What for? What a cry. The hall was worked up to breaking point. And all for this State! For these Jews! For the capitalists! . . . So terrific was the yell that resounded through the hall that Bäuerle trembled. The answer came in a roar of desperation from a thousand throats. This man made their voices his. He took the spilled blood of Stählin and Anhegger and dipped his hands in it and scattered it over the throng, and where it fell flames leapt up, inextinguishable flames. Bäuerle bit the ebony handle of his stick. All round him he felt the seething, quivering living mass. In the face of this monstrous spell-binding he sat dismayed. Suddenly fresh blows started raining on the quivering body. To us the power! To us the power! To us! And they sprang to their feet and shouted with exultation and flung their hands into the air and his will seized hold of them and captured them and ravished them away until they could neither see nor think, and were reduced to the state they ought to be in. . . . Or not? Bäuerle did not stifle his thoughts. In the midst of the uproar, the fury, the tumult and the exaltation he looked at the man in cold blood. He watched his gestures, the frantic movements of his arms, the threatening gestures of his fists, the masterful motions of his downward-pointing hands. And he saw how the people followed his gestures, how they exalted themselves and abased themselves and hated and drank the cup of humiliation and worked themselves up to a frenzy when he put his finger on their wounds. That was the secret. Bäuerle had hit on it now. Here was a man who put his finger remorselessly on their wounds. Nay more, he inflamed them, laid them pitilessly bare. How they jumped to their feet and roared and yelled! What was he saying now? We are poor. We have nothing left. You and you and you, and the whole of the honest German people . . . Hear! Hear! Hear! Hear! they yelled back at him. The fever has them in its grip. They can cry aloud at all that hurts them now. At home, at the office, in the presence of the officials they must re-

strain themselves. But in this man's presence, no! The American sat in his place, watching keenly. He sensed the mounting horror. The inmates of a stupendous hospital had jumped up and recognized their wounds. No need for them to smile, as they smiled when the ordinary doctors came upon their rounds. Here was a new doctor, pointing relentlessly to the blood and the festering wounds. Give me the knife, he shouted, give me the power!

The hall was on its feet. A Heil! from a thousand throats swelled up towards the roof. The man walked silently down from the platform. The people formed a gangway for him, tearing each other's clothes, jumping up on the seats, with dishevelled hair and waving hands, a whirlpool of men and women. And as his escort of young men cleared a way for him and he advanced through the throng with measured step, Dr. Kalahne suddenly stood up in the gallery and his voice came clear and loud above the uproar.

"Fellow Germans!" he cried. "The other nations have buried their Unknown Soldier. In Germany he has arisen! Heil Hitler! Heil Hitler! Heil Hitler!"

Jacob, the vacuum-cleaner man, passed the night at the station hotel and did not wake up till the following afternoon. When he did wake up, he had pasty eyes, sore limbs and a sick stomach. He blinked, and saw that his clothes were strewn all over the floor. He got up, went over to the wash-stand, wetted his face and hair and wiped his shoes on the sofa cover. Then he went over to the window and yawned. His room was on an upper storey, and looking out of the window made him feel giddy. He went back into the room, pulled on his trousers and picked up his coat from the floor. Money jingled in the side-pocket. Jacob took the coins and laid them on the table. Forty-two marks. He looked at the money blankly. He felt for his wallet in his breast-pocket, took it out and examined it. Yes, the three twenty-mark notes, the last that Jacob possessed, were still there. He placed them next to the silver. Dash it all, where on earth did the money come from? He thought and thought. A large, round, white patch, rather like the Sahara Desert, suddenly appeared in the atlas of his memory.

He rang the bell and ordered a bottle of mineral water. While he was drinking it he suddenly heard the sound of people running in the street. He heard music and the sound of marching men. He forced himself to go over to the window, although he felt very groggy. Oh, dear, he said to himself as he looked out. Those Nazis again, with their confounded racket, as usual. As he stood at the window, watching the Brownshirts marching by, the Sahara Desert grew smaller and smaller and a savings-bank book rose before his eyes and a man lying on the ground and fifty marks. He went back into the room once more. On the commode there was a piece of his firm's notepaper, with "revenge" written on it in pencil, and next to it a revolver.

Jacob quickly packed his bag. When he went out into the street it was six o'clock. He went into a restaurant and ate a pickled cucumber and drank two glasses of beer. Then he walked up to the Bahnhofstrasse and turned down a side street. There was the shop. Jacob bought a big box of Queen of Shebas. The proprietor eyed him. "Well, have you made up your mind?" he said. Jacob murmured something, and bought another packet and *Scherk's Magazine* as well. Then he went into the gardens. The magazine was full of pictures of swagger women. Jacob liked that sort of thing. Half-naked beauties on tiger-skins, or standing in front of an orchid. Hell, he said to himself, what would I give for a little shop like that, with a discreet little business in smutty pictures carried on behind the counter—juicier than these, of course? It was a paying game. He had a very bad stomach-ache. He couldn't get that Nazi out of his head. The man seemed to be baiting him with that savings-bank book. He went into an inn to calm himself. People were talking about the Brownshirts everywhere. Jacob had disliked them for a long time. When he was still a respectable citizen travelling in vacuum-cleaners he had once called on a veterinary surgeon at Rothenburg who was one of these brown fellows. He had left a vacuum-cleaner on approval for a fortnight, and when he went back to fetch it the machine was broken. The thing was defective, the veterinary surgeon yelled at him. A vacuum-cleaner of mine defective? Jacob had courteously

replied. My dear sir, you're insulting a make with a world-wide reputation! To hell with your world-wide reputation! the Brownshirt had bellowed, and before Jacob knew where he was he found himself the other side of the front door with the vacuum-cleaner by his side. Jacob had never forgotten that incident. It seemed incredible to him that a man with a university education should behave in such a fashion, but this was precisely the sort of thing the Brownshirt Movement led to. It did away with all polish and grace. Good manners had completely disappeared.

Jacob drank. The wine was sour. Anger and poverty gave one a mighty thirst. After the third glass Jacob started laughing. What a fool I am, he said aloud. He started blithely working things out. Their great big chief's going to start speaking at eight o'clock. The meeting's bound to last till nine. And after an affair like that they're certain not to go home so quickly. They'll start drinking and beating up educated people. Quite likely it'll go on till midnight. And if she stays at home on a night like this I'll eat my hat. And even if she does stay at home I'll soon settle her. Very well, at half-past eight he would be there. She always used to leave the key under the mat. The desk's in the living-room. The top left-hand drawer. Jacob remembered it all distinctly from earlier days. He called for a time-table. Just a minute, how on earth could he draw the cash? Impossible before nine o'clock tomorrow morning. Damn! But when they come home tonight they'll have other things to do than rummaging round in their drawers. And by the time they wake up I'll have the money, and by ten o'clock I'll be sitting in the Hamburg express. Jacob went on drinking brandy and wine and vermouth indiscriminately. He started drawing a picture of Amsterdam on the tablecloth with a pencil, and beside it he drew a tulip. Oh, yes, Jacob knew all about foreign countries. Three thousand six hundred—he could certainly start something with that. And if he didn't find anything he'd go on living till it was all gone. To hell with poverty-stricken, down-and-out Germany.

Sail along, little boat, rock on the ocean wave. . . .

Jacob called the waiter.

"Have you by any chance got a piece of wire?"

"A piece of wire?"

"Yes, a thin piece of wire. My trunk slammed by accident and I've lost the key."

He hadn't learned the locksmith's trade for nothing.

Shortly before half-past eight he left the bar and walked towards the Topfengasse.

This was a day of culminating happiness for Jürgen. The Leader had talked to him during the afternoon, and after the meeting, he talked to him again. Dern and Hungrich were jealous of their talking together for so long. Each time Jürgen faltered Gerhard Träger smiled and helped him out. Jürgen told the Leader everything. He described the struggle here in Siebenwasser, he grumbled at the bourgeoisie, he talked of Maria and the money she sacrificed for the cause; and he talked about the workers who were drawn up behind him. They were his own work, and he had saved them for German Socialism. The Leader looked deeply into his eyes and said that when the Siebenwasser Standard was dedicated next day, Jürgen would carry it when he, the Leader, touched it with the Blood Flag.

And now Jürgen was on the way to Petermann's pub, where Maria and the best members of the stormtroop were waiting for him.

Jürgen was whistling. He started singing.

German Socialists, hand in hand, ranging ourselves in battle-array.

He turned down the Topfengasse. Outside Maria's house he stopped. Should he fetch her wrap or not? They wouldn't be back till late. Better see she keeps herself warm. He went in.

When Jacob went into the yard he noticed the shutters of the kitchen windows were open. There was no light in any of the rooms. You can't help being lucky sometimes, Jacob said to himself and climbed in. He didn't take long to find his way about. He knew the house well enough from old times. He found the desk

without the aid of a light. Damn, the drawer was locked. Never mind. Jacob took the piece of wire from his pocket and inserted it in the lock. He couldn't move it. How tough the thing was. Could it be a secret drawer? Whores had no secret drawers. He pulled at the wire. The desk shook. My God, that lock's tough. Jacob worked away at it. After every ten deep breaths he stopped and listened. Several times he heard footsteps in the street. They made him feel cold all over. Then he started working at the lock again. It made him hot. He grew angry. Should he smash the drawer open? But they would see it when they came home. If only I had a light. He groped around and found a candle-stump. That won't show through the shutters. Very well then, at it. He lit the candle. He was all worked up with the excitement of it. Amsterdam, Amsterdam, Amsterdam. . . .

When Jürgen entered the passage he saw a glimmer under the door. At first he thought it was a reflection of the lamps outside. But there weren't any lamps outside the house.

Crash! The sound of something falling came from inside the room. Then Jürgen heard the rustling of papers and a laugh. He flung open the door. "So that's it!" he roared and sprang at the man. He seized him by the throat and kicked him in the stomach. He felt a blow on the head. Crash! It grew light, terribly light, unbearably light. Oh, my God, what was this ghastly inescapable brilliance? Would there be no end to it? The house was on fire. Sparks, sparks. Jürgen tottered out into the street and collapsed, shouting: "Maria!"

Hanns was hurrying home to Weissenfels. He was running. It was a pitch-black night. He stumbled over the roots, and scratched himself on the stones, but did not feel it. The fright he had had this evening was too great for that. That's all dead and finished, he exclaimed. That's all dead and finished. He picked up a stone and flung it into the gorge. A gentle echo came in answer. Hanns stared into the night. The invisible wind blew through the trees. Creaking noises came from the bushes. Things crept and crawled on the ground. What was that cry? Was it animal or human?

It sounded just like a child. But it was only babbling water. Hanns went on running. Deeper and deeper he went into the dark curtain of night, to which there seemed to be no end.

When he reached the meadow he stopped. He saw the light. It was alone in the night, waiting for him. He ran towards it. He threw stones behind him while he ran.

"Go away!" he shouted. "Go away!"

At the gate he pulled himself together and regained his breath. He dried the sweat from his brow. No, he would not tell Irene that Gerhard Träger was in Siebenwasser again.

Behind the light the girl had been waiting for him for a long time. But nothing was to be heard except the soughing of the wind in the trees. Irene made a funnel of blue paper and placed it over the bed-lamp and tried to make signals. She tried to beckon him tenderly with the light. But his footsteps did not come out of the pitiless darkness.

Hour after hour passed in this way. The girl sat behind the light, her hands embracing her knees. The wind whistled over the wood. It whistled and whistled.

Irene stood up. She heard his footsteps. He was coming across the lawn. She moved the lamp. He was below her window. She could not see him, but she could feel that he was there. She put out the light. She heard the door open. It was he.

"If only the sun doesn't rise too early," the girl whispered.

The blood transfusion was successful. Dr. Wachtel breathed again. If the heart picks up now . . . He felt the patient's pulse. He could hardly feel anything at all. He tried another injection. Sodium chloride solution and dextrose are our best friends, my dear chap. Remarkable, he's opened his eyes, the pupils react, but will the heart pull round?

Sister Marianne looked at the doctor. The hard expression that always came into his eyes when he was confronted with death was in them now. They were well acquainted, death and he.

"Camphor," Wachtel said. He inserted the needle. The shot in the dark had succeeded.

The patient grew restless. His lips moved. "Maria," he whispered. He smiled. His eyes shone. Perspiration appeared on his brow. He talked aloud. "Tomorrow," he said. "Maria. The Standard." Then he started singing softly. *"Clear the streets for the brown battalions."*

"All over," Dr. Wachtel said. "Euphoria." He rose to his feet. "Are any relatives here?" he asked Sister Marianne. "No, only that woman."

"We can't let her in," Dr. Wachtel said. "You can't die well with someone howling round you."

"I want to get up. I'm quite all right," said Jürgen, sitting up. He smiled at Dr. Wachtel. "What do you want of me?"

"Just rest a bit, my friend. It doesn't go so fast as all that. Perhaps tomorrow, after dinner, you'll be able to sit in the garden." Dr. Wachtel forced him gently back on the pillow.

The doctor's words upset Jürgen very much.

"But that's impossible, doctor. It's absolutely out of the question. Tomorrow the Standard—our Standard—the Leader—What do you mean, after dinner? Are you mad?"

He flung back the bed-clothes and wanted to get out of bed.

"But look, I can stand, I can walk, can't I?"

They forced him back into bed. He lay back, white against the white sheets. The death-rattle started. The whites of his eyes grew bigger and bigger.

Dr. Wachtel gave him another injection. He's nearly beyond us, he thought. He noticed the tiny light next to the telephone was on. Dr. Wachtel picked up the receiver. "Certainly," he said, "if the gentlemen don't mind my presence." Then he bent over Jürgen. "Some visitors coming to see you," he said. "Very important visitors." Jürgen smiled. His lips were like wax. "I know," he whispered, and put his hands carefully on the bed-cover.

As they entered the room Kalahne looked inquiringly at Dr. Wachtel. Dr. Wachtel nodded.

They walked over to the bed. There was a glimmer of light in Jürgen's eyes. "Courage," said Kalahne's companion. "Courage, *Standardleader* Winkler!"

A tremor passed over the dying man's face. But the tears seemed to have flown in the face of death. His lips quivered. Suddenly a sweet peace came over him.

"Kalahne," the dying man whispered, trying to beckon him closer. "Kalah . . ." Kalahne bent his ear over Jürgen's mouth, and raised his head. The dying man's fingers moved anxiously to and fro on the bed-cover. "He wants to say something," Kalahne said. The dying man nodded, nodded in terrible haste. "Yes, yes, quickly, quickly!" They raised him. His breath was departing. His hands clutched at the collar of the man bending over him. His perspiration moistened the living man's brow.

"You," said Jürgen Winkler with his failing breath, "you—must—make—Socialism."

When they laid him back on his pillow he was smiling, as in a dream.

CHAPTER VII

A YEAR passed by, a year of unrest, of ever-increasing crisis, of ever-growing bewilderment. Many factories closed down in Siebenwasser. Weber's men worked only three days a week. Banks, lawyers, business houses cut down their staffs by half. Anyone not ready to work ten hours a day or more for a diminished salary could go, for hundreds were waiting to take his place. It was just the reverse of the inflation period. Then it had been money that lost its value. This time it was human beings.

Kalahne coldly enjoyed his triumph in the September elections. The smashing successes of the new Movement astonished even the highest circles within the Party. The principle of fighting for power by legal means seemed to have been brilliantly vindicated. On the night the election results were declared, when the city was still effervescing under the influence of the unexpected triumph, Kalahne retired to his rooms, not to reappear until three days later. He spent the time working out plans for the next step in the Movement's forward march, without the assistance of Dern and Hungrich, who sat in Mother Döring's Inn, surrounded by a halo of glory as the heroes of the day. From the first of October onwards the *Alarm* appeared every day. The paper's slogan—*"For German Socialism, against Western Capitalism"*—appeared in a panel next to the title. The elections took place a week after the death of Jürgen Winkler, and his portrait, with the caption: "German worker, he died for you," appeared on every page. Kalahne wrote a number of stories in which Jürgen's life was portrayed in naïve and simple language—plebeian legends with stirring undertones. After pondering for a long time he hit on a phrase which

would serve for the dead man's testament. "The meaning of German Socialism is to live in poverty yet love the Fatherland all the same."

Fortunately he had managed to clear that doubtful person Maria out of Siebenwasser. True, she had sobbed her eyes out and declared that she wanted to stay near her Jürgen, who lay in the cemetery so terribly alone. But Kalahne wouldn't put up with any nonsense. She had been arrested three times, and made to feel the icy mistrust in which she was held by the authorities. Without Kalahne's intervention she would long ago have been in prison, and Kalahne now demanded the price of his protection. Maria disappeared from Siebenwasser inconspicuously. With the help of the money in her savings bank she bought a little tobacconist's business in a small town on the Main, and she had Jürgen's photograph enlarged and hung it in her room, so that she could see it when she fell asleep and when she awoke.

The flood of propaganda Kalahne let loose immediately after the elections was not confined to meetings. He instituted the block-watch system, which worked as follows: In each block of flats a reliable member of the Party was selected, and all those thus chosen were formed into an organization which worked under Kalahne's orders. Besides straightforward propaganda work, such as trying to convince people, distributing literature and founding cells, it was the duty of these men to keep a watch on individual families, spread rumours injurious to the State and the predominant political parties, and, above all, keep political opponents, including the details of their private lives, under sharp observation. Adventurousness and prying curiosity combined to form an invisible weapon, with the aid of which Kalahne constantly increased his domination over the city's social life. At first his net was invisible, but he drew it tighter from day to day.

Nevertheless the keynote of all his policy remained a human figure. This hater and despiser of bourgeois individualism lauded the victory in the September elections as that of a single man. Using words that often bordered on the delirious, he set up the figure of Adolf Hitler in opposition to the teeming anonymity of

the other parties. He set up a single personality in opposition to the mechanical, bureaucratic machine. He knew that in time of distress men want a deliverer, and that the deliverer must be a man of flesh and blood. He must be tangible, not an institution; not an aggregation of thoughtful brains, but one man set up before all the people. That is what Kalahne did. He shelved Party points and Party programmes and substituted for them the single phrase "Trust in him!" and so he drove the Movement forward.

Kalahne offered the masses many variations on the same theme. Some of them bordered on the mystical. His first was the Unknown Soldier, resurrected in Germany. This he followed up with St. George, setting out to slay the dragon while the old counsellors were still discussing whether or not it might be better to negotiate with the beast. He followed up the knight who slew the dragon with Christopher, who carried the poor child Germany through the bloody seas of want. Christopher was succeeded by the grave and worthy Master Eckehart, freed at last from legends and fairy-stories—trusty Eckehart, deliverer of the people from the mockery and hatred of a godless world.

He invoked the Christian-German myth, and its strength proved stronger than twenty party programmes.

"We are starting history all over again," he wrote in the *Alarm*. "Since the time of the Hohenstaufen the German people have been on the wrong track. The blood of Germany's best sons flowed in vain. That blood cries out to us down the centuries: Build the Realm! Save the people!"

He overwhelmed men's minds with his mysterious incantations. He tore open one grave after another. Henry the Lion, Master Eckehart, Thomas Münzer, Ulrich von Huttenin—in each grave there lay a betrayed German hero.

Kalahne weaved his mystical web round everything—the economic crisis, unemployment, capitalism, the Stock Exchange crash. He presented them all in the light of an age-old conspiracy. The Jew was Fenriswolf. The Pope was the Whore of Babylon. France, hotbed of Freemasonry and Marxism, was no longer the France of the Pan-Germans. No longer did she appear in the guise of

Richelieu hating beyond the grave. She was represented now in the guise of an African idol. Just as she betrayed the Nordic blood of the Huguenots, so was she preparing now for the last blow, the breaking of the German race.

Though Kalahne deliberately invoked these transports he never forgot his own clear thinking. He left the preaching of anti-Semitism to Dern while he created the image of St. George, the dragon-slayer, the light-bearer. Kalahne held the torch while Dern cracked the whip. Thus seething darkness and glittering light mingled to form an ecstasy in the face of which their opponents, who relied on reason and argument alone, necessarily foundered.

On one occasion a Social-Democrat councillor sarcastically asked Dr. Kalahne at a meeting whether he could explain to him the remarkable inconsistencies of the Party programme. Kalahne answered him with flashing eyes.

"The man of the new age does not die for a Party programme that he understands. He dies for a belief that he loves."

The councillor laughed aloud. But Kalahne knew the Germans better than he did. He knew that in Germany emotion has always conquered intelligence, and his words, challenging to every intellectual, to every individual who used his common sense, branded themselves into the hearts of the young. To the unemployed youths of that time it seemed better to believe and die than to doubt and live.

Thus in the course of a year the atmosphere of Siebenwasser was thoroughly imbued with fanaticism, exaltation and hatred. The realities of the situation were lost sight of. The economic crisis was overshadowed by mystic revelations. The economic crisis was not seen as such but was broadened out into the crisis of the Germans as five centuries of history had left them. The most uncanny, the most striking feature of it all was that the leaders of the Movement were completely immune from the intoxication themselves. In the midst of all these transports they succeeded in remaining cold-blooded. They kept their political lynx-eyes wide open. In the midst of the orgy they preserved an icy sobriety.

Were they possessed men having the cool-headedness of engi-

neers, Bäuerle wondered, or cold-blooded Prussians, lusting for power, who danced like dervishes till the people fell down before them?

After the volcanic eruption in September he went to Nauheim to take the cure. He spent four weeks aloof from events. When he came back to Weissenfels he kept his feelings to himself. His views and ideas, his love for Germany were in a painful state of flux. He listened with a sad smile to Schrader's attempts to paint the situation in less gloomy colours. When Schrader used the word "reason" he only shook his head. How hollow that word sounded in Germany! It reminded Johann Kaspar of a man lost in a maze calling out: "Exit straight ahead!" No, it was better to maintain silence. It was better to remain alone. But when Schrader produced his final argument, which was that foreign countries would never tolerate a government led by this man, he rose to his feet and shouted, making the wine shake in the glasses and causing Irene to come running in to see what was the matter.

"I see!" he exclaimed. "I see! Foreign countries, indeed! And what about you and your champions of liberty? Have you got nothing left to say in the matter?"

Long after Schrader left he went on sitting in his chair. Colour had fled from his cheeks. It had become painfully clear to him that this democratic Germany was only a by-product of the peace treaties, and not, as he had dreamed, the fulfilment of a historic mission.

"They just don't want it," he said to himself when he read the *Alarm*, or listened to the singing of the S.A. or heard of the increasing enthusiasm for the Movement in the towns and villages. "They just don't want it."

He was sufficient of an American to think practically. He was not deceived by the opposition to the Movement in the newspapers and in intellectual circles. He was not deceived even by the opposition manifested at workers' meetings. How lifeless all the opposition seemed at heart! How divided it was by conflicting interests, how hampered and inhibited by all sorts of qualifications and uncertainties! It was only painfully held together by the necessity for

common defence. It bore the marks of failure all too plainly. Even in its propaganda it was but a pale imitation of the methods of the ingenious Dr. Kalahne. The slender, pallid man, scarcely more than thirty years old, slighted by nature as he was, was consumed by a fiery passion that could not possibly be simulated. He was the personification of the absolute will to power. What good did it do the Socialists to quote their Marx, nail down their opponents' inconsistencies, use logic as their weapon? In the face of St. George, in the face of Master Eckehart, their clever Marx shrivelled to ashes. You can't combat a dream with logic. No, I'm not a blind man. And if this youth, this uprising against my world, this blond, blue-eyed blasphemy against the laws which I hold true, strides across me too, am I to turn and say, no, it is not true, it will pass by, other countries will never put up with such a thing? The very idea of other countries sent Johann Kaspar into a rage. So that is what your democracy is—nothing but the Preamble to the Treaty of Versailles, resting on nothing but the fears of a beaten bourgeoisie!

Thus Johann Kaspar brooded bitterly at Weissenfels. The bread tasted bitter in his mouth and the wine went flat in the beaker.

The alteration in her father after his holiday in Nauheim did not escape Irene. He seemed to have awakened from a dream and to be still brooding over it. He worked till late in the evening, and after nightfall she would often hear him wandering through the house, as though he were searching for something. She could only remember very indistinctly how he had behaved during the war, but she felt it must have been very much as he was behaving now. She found many books on his writing-table, books bearing swastikas, books bearing the sickle and the hammer—a whole battlefield of books. One morning she found the *Myth of the Twentieth Century* lying charred in the fireplace and took it back to her room. Later she cleaned it up as well as she could and discovered a sentence in her father's handwriting on the fly-leaf. "It'll have to happen without me," the sentence said.

She said nothing, but she felt alarmed when the very same day

she discovered on the dark, wainscotted walls of the dining-room, where the family portraits hung, an inscription under the faded photograph of her great-grandfather: "Friedrich Konrad Bäuerle, shot by the Prussians at Rastatt in 1848—in vain!"

She asked Hanns anxiously who the Prussians might be. The question made Hanns laugh. "They live in the north, where no wine grows," he said. "Sometimes they come south to get wine, and then there's a war!" Irene angrily left the meadow where Hanns was sitting in the grass having his tea. So he teased her too. But she said nothing about the thoughts that oppressed her.

Three days later she cleared out her father's waste-paper basket. In it she found many torn pieces of paper—letters started and not finished, letters to friend Baker in Baltimore. With the patience of her feminine curiosity she fitted the pieces of paper together. Hardly any of the sheets were more than half-filled, but Irene came again and again upon the phrase:

". . . and so I ask myself: do I still belong to this people, my dear Baker, or am I a homeless man once more?"

Irene burned the scraps of paper. But whenever she saw her father walking across the fields she imagined she saw this question stalking along behind him.

Hanns was in the garden, digging. He struck his spade sharply into the firm ground. It was black, healthy soil. Hanns felt happy. There was no hurry about the work. He had plenty of time to think his own thoughts. Slowly he placed clod upon clod. How smoothly the spade cleft into the soil. Two years ago he had not been able to dig up a garden bed without raising bleeding blisters on his hands, but now he wielded the spade as though it were part of his own body. Yes, he felt sure of himself now. Everything inside him was calm and settled. Irene was no longer a dream. The idea of her was implanted within him, moved within him, lived within him, like his own blood. Things like that were too deep to talk about.

Hanns laughed. He thought of the fear he felt the night he fled from Gerhard to Irene. Standing here like this on his tall, strong

legs and digging, he could no longer understand how he had managed to feel so afraid that night. How stupid he had been! The whole thing had been so simple.

He met Gerhard after Jürgen's funeral. They walked upstream together, as far as the lock, where the road to Weissenfels turns off, and they sat down on an old tip-lorry in a red stone pit, next to a collapsed corrugated iron shed. They had smoked and looked down at the river, and at first it seemed as if there were to be no end to that ending.

But then Hanns spoke up and told Gerhard the truth, quite simply and straightforwardly. And as what he said was the truth there had been no need for many words. The officer said nothing in reply, and when Hanns asked him if he considered him a traitor, he shook his head and did not speak.

Later they climbed up to Weissenfels, between the vines and among the barrels, which were full of grapes, and Hanns asked whether it was so very dreadful to be in love with a girl and to have become a peasant—yes, just a simple, ordinary peasant. If Gerhard blamed him for it, he said, it simply proved that he had overrated him before. He was a simple, ordinary human being. He had discovered it at last.

The officer had been kind and friendly. He told Hanns all about the Movement's victorious advance and described how marvellous the Leader was, but Hanns kept on coming back to the subject of the fields, and what a nuisance the stones and weeds had been and how everything had been allowed to fall into decay, even the woods and the vineyards. He couldn't get away from the subject. This estate of Weissenfels, with its cares and its harvests, had become a part of his being. He was a fighter no longer. He took far too much pleasure in everything that grew and thrived. It was a dreadful confession, but it was true.

Suddenly Gerhard laughed. They went to the village inn and drunk some wine and ate bread and cheese. It was a golden-brown autumn evening.

On the way back to Siebenwasser they both whistled and Gerhard, who had a black uniform on, actually kicked the stones in

front of him, so happy were they both. What was the cause of that? It came from having spoken the truth.

At the station the officer grew serious. He took Hanns by the arm. They walked under the lights, among the crowd of people, as they had done before. Gerhard spoke no word, but held his arm tight, as though he never meant to let him go. And then the train came in, and the officer took his seat and looked out of the window at Hanns for a long time, and as the train started to move out of the station he bent down and whispered: "I envy you," and then the train left.

And that was how it had passed off. It had been a bit gloomy and depressing, it is true. And now here I am, digging, Hanns said to himself. What else should I do but dig and be at peace? No, he was no traitor. Gerhard said so. He was just a simple person, though that was something he hadn't known before. In the past he had always wanted to be exalted, to feel a fiery furnace within him. But now he lived in Irene. He no longer wanted to feel a fiery furnace within him. What was within him now was no consuming furnace but a steady glow. Hanns went more rapidly about his digging. He dug a straight furrow. He cut through a root. The iron grated against a stone.

I envy you. I envy you. He could not get the phrase out of his head. During the past year it had recurred to him constantly—when he was with Irene, when he strode along next to the swaying harvest carts, when the potatoes were poured down into the basement, and the sweet milk filled the glass, and when they filled the vine-presses and the green sap flowed into the wooden vats.

Hanns dug and dug. And as he turned the earth over and over the flavour of the rich loam mounted to his nostrils, and the evening bell rang down in the village, a cart loaded high with hay came swaying through the big gate, and a phrase that Gerhard Träger had written to him two years before, when he was at Hanau, occurred to his mind: "We were children, and then we became soldiers."

That's just the trouble, Hanns said to himself. You never lived.

He struck his spade hard into the soil. Perspiration dripped into

his eyes. Here was Irene coming across the farm, carrying in her hands a dark, heavy bunch of grapes.

Autumn that year was remarkably mild and gentle. Long after the vintage was over and the new wine had started fermenting and bubbling in the vats the sun still lay heavy and warm above the woods.

Johann Kaspar arranged a harvest festival for the fifteenth of October. He had a large marquee erected on the lawn, and a floor laid down for dancing. Tables and benches were set up all round in the open air. Two butts of wine stood ready on a cart. Loaves of bread piled up to little brown mountains in the bakery. Carts laden with plates, glasses and cutlery came up from Siebenwasser, rattling and clattering through the valley as though it were the Lord's wedding day.

Johann Kaspar and Henrici walked together across the lawn. They counted the tables and the chairs, calculated the amount of crockery that would be required, and talked things over with the wine stewards. They allowed the band to rehearse for a whole hour on the day before the event.

What had come over Bäuerle? Nobody could divine the reason for his sudden outburst of happiness. The man had changed completely overnight. Even Irene could not understand his change of mood. The fact that Weissenfels had had its first proper vintage since Ursel Fabricius' time was not sufficient to explain the sudden lavish outlay of money and labour. "It'll cost us three thousand marks at least," Henrici grumbled, shaking his head. "We'll go through with it if it costs us five thousand," was Bäuerle's answer, and he and Hanns went to the edge of the wood and fetched birch twigs, which they placed between the tables and in front of the main door on the floor.

The day of the festival was clear and bright. Garlands hung round the windows and the gables. The black, white and red flag fluttered over the white marquee. The ox was slaughtered in the stall, and the village children played noisily on the playground prepared for them on the lawn. Bäuerle stood quietly looking out into the gentle light. The instruments of the approaching musi-

cians glittered in the dust of the distant road. Down below in the basement the wine was seething in the vats. Johann Kaspar took a deep breath. His homeland was near to him now, as near as it could be. He was ready to forget everything in return for this one day. All he cared about was to see this light and taste this wine, and he wanted all those around him to take part in the joy that he was compelling. Yes, compelling. He had erected the marquee and ordered the music and sacrificed an ox, and summoned the people from Siebenwasser and the peasants from Weissenfels. They were to dance and drink all through the night, without hatred, without want, for twelve long hours.

Bäuerle smiled. He knew that what he was expecting was a Utopia. It was a whim, an American fad. And next day three thousand marks would have gone up the chimney, like a burning straw. But he had got the idea of this harvest festival fixed in his head and nothing could shake it out of him. He wanted to make this gesture before the winter came. For it was going to be a long one.

He walked slowly down the steps. He took pleasure in the garlands, the waving flags, the beauty of the autumn scene.

The band, playing gaily, were the first to arrive. When they got to the farm they stopped playing. As they played the last note they drew their instruments sharply to their sides, as smartly as rifles. "Coffee!" Fräulein Degerloch called out. "Coffee!"

Women came running past with steaming jugs of coffee, and the men went laughing into the barn.

It was five o'clock. The first guests from Siebenwasser thronged the lawn outside the marquee. The Odenwald Society come marching along in serried ranks, and occupied the left side of the tent. The men carried oak walking-sticks with badges on them. Their ladies, as they called their wives, were prepared for any eventuality and had brought bread and butter with them, for you could never rely on the organization of a festival like this. Two farm carts came lumbering along, containing peasant lads from Weissenfels village, with their girls. Red and green streamers fluttered in the

breeze. You could hear the muffled sound of the horns of the cars bringing Schrader and the principal town officials up the winding road to the estate. In their wake was Herr Aschaffenburg in his Steyr limousine. And now they started pouring over the brow of the hill—peasants from the neighboring villages, workers from Siebenwasser, officials, clerks. "Just look," Kilian Kern said to his wife up at the edge of the wood. "There's no need for us to be shy. There are crowds of people there!"

As they entered the marquee the wine butts were opened and the fragrance of the roasting ox mingled with the autumn air.

The band, playing gaily, approached from the house. Behind them came rows and rows of girls in brightly coloured costumes, holding arms, and behind them the farm-hands, wearing high, black boots, leather breeches and dark-blue short coats with yellow buttons and stiff hats. And among them, wearing his ordinary working clothes, marched Johann Kaspar Bäuerle, with a red-and-yellow fancy handkerchief round his neck, singing and laughing and looking a happy man. The procession reached the dance floor to the sound of loud cheering. The wine was passed round the tables in wooden jugs and Johann Kaspar went up on the platform and stood among the many-coloured cloths and the golden-brown garlands and received a goblet crowned with vine from the hands of the youngest girl. There was a flourish of trumpets and Johann Kaspar raised the goblet with a firm hand. The sun's rays fell upon the brightly burnished glass. "Thanks be to God and joy to mankind. And may the vine flourish for ever!"

The man stood squarely in the light of the setting sun. Holding the goblet in both his hands, he raised it to his lips and as he drank everyone in the marquee rose to their feet and poured the life-blood of the hillside down their throats.

Night had fallen. It was blue and cloudless. The music of the band came floating across from the marquee. The laughter of the dancers, snatches of song from the first drunkards, the chatter of the women and above it all the soft melody of a waltz tune were carried across the field by the wind and scattered into infinite space.

Hanns and Irene went up the path behind the artesian well. Where they went was all the same to them. All they wanted was to get away from the noise and the atmosphere of the party, which was getting more and more suffocating. They had no need to dance to feel the unity of their hearts. Irene had grown giddy while waltzing just now. She was not used to wine and so many merry people. Why on earth had father insisted on giving this festival? He was sitting among the peasants, drinking and playing dice with them. Every now and then he would jump to his feet and dance with one of the girls until he was quite out of breath. He laughed as though he were the guest and not the host of the many people who had come.

Irene stopped still. She rested her head on Hanns's shoulder and felt his warm breath on her hair.

They stayed like this for a long time. No thought constrained them. With the infinite gaze of lovers they looked into the night sky, with its carpet of stars seeming to extend right down to the treetops in the wood.

Then they walked on silently. Laughter and the sound of voices floated up to them from the marquee on the lawn. The two walked peacefully on, the boy showing Irene the way so that she should not stumble.

Silence, nothing but silence was all round them. It seemed as soft and gentle as the mist between the tree-trunks yonder. They sat down on a seat. Animals scampered away in the darkness. From time to time a leaf fell to the ground.

Irene was the first to break the silence. What she said was not proper speech. She uttered words that would have been incomprehensible to an eavesdropper. "In June," she said. "Perhaps in May." "Or even April," answered Hanns. Irene gently slapped his hand. "No!" Hanns did not move. He felt Irene breathing by his side. Suddenly she started stroking his hand, then, very gently, she kissed his wrist. "Is it true?" he asked. She did not reply. She merely stretched her body. Her warm lips touched his ear. He felt her nodding her head.

Once more silence surrounded them. The band in the marquee

could blare away as much as it liked. They held each other by the hand, tightly intertwining their fingers. This was exactly how they had sat the day before, when Irene had broached the subject for the first time.

"When?" asked Hanns, feeling as though he were asking not Irene but the whole invisible expanse of country that was before his eyes.

"June," the girl answered. "Perhaps in May."

They spoke no more. And the wind whispered over them, and the months, like small, fleeting lights, bobbed up and down in front of them on the waves of the invisible.

Midnight came. Loud roaring songs reverberated from the marquee. Wine had been spilled on the floor. The ox had long since been consumed. Loaves of bread and big dishes full of steaming sausages were now passing swiftly backwards and forwards along the tables. The Odenwald Society had got drunk en masse. Again and again they sang their club refrain, the words of which had been written by Father Allwohn.

"Green the hills and green the valleys
Of the land that is our home;
Elfen land of all our rallies,
Where we ever love to roam. . . ."

The peasants made an uproar on their own. They knew what green hills and valleys meant. Then beer was brought in, light, foaming Würzburg beer in earthenware mugs. The singing was submerged in general jubilation, and the band broke into *We won't go home tonight!*

Bäuerle was sitting at Schrader's table. He felt the influence of the wine, and the noisy enjoyment of all the people in the marquee gave him great pleasure. True, Schrader was in one of his sad moods. It was a quiet, unobtrusive sadness. To make up for it Herr Aschaffenburg was giggling so comically that the pink flesh of his cheeks was wobbling. "A popular festival like this," he said

to Bäuerle, almost tenderly, "a popular festival like this is the jolliest thing in all the world." Just then two fresh beer barrels were brought in, drawn by harnessed goats, and the god Gambrinus appeared upon the stage, with a wreath of radishes and carrots round his head. "It's my hour now!" he shouted, and there was an uproar of shouting and laughter, and men started hanging pairs of sausages over their ears and dancing between the tables and on the platform, rejoicing as if the real feast were only just beginning. Herr Aschaffenburg was completely carried away. He wasn't drinking beer but wine. Three glasses, just think of it! And Father Allwohn drank to him and when Herr Aschaffenburg called out: "Here's your health!" the old man said: "Well, well, you poor old Jew!" It was marvellous. It was years since Herr Aschaffenburg had been so thoroughly among the people. And he felt no fear whatever. No, where Bäuerle was there was no hatred. He had another sip and said to himself: Just think of it, three little glasses like this, and all your troubles are gone! Tomorrow morning he would certainly tell his book-keeper to order him some wine. All he had in the cupboard at home was blood-orange juice, in case anybody wanted a bitter drink.

"Drink, drink, drink, brother, drink,
Leave all your troubles at home. . ."

"Yes, yes," Aschaffenburg said into Bäuerle's ear. "Away with troubles, away with care!" And his heavy body swayed in time with the music, and the wine in his glass was swaying too. Bäuerle looked along the table. What was this? The throng inside the marquee was becoming still denser. Am I seeing double? But look, still more people are coming in, groups of them. They were all wearing leather gaiters. What was the meaning of this? They didn't dance or sing but were forcing their way round the edge of the tent. "Hi, Henrici!" Henrici came and pulled a sour face. "Looks ugly," he said. Dancing, drinking, laughing and singing went on as before, but suddenly something else was there. Something seemed to be lurking, lying in wait, like frost behind a fog. Bäuerle looked around. There was Father Allwohn, standing on a table, pretending he was playing the fiddle with his walking-stick.

There was Aschaffenburg, lolling in his chair, with half-closed eyes, singing. What was he singing? *Leave all your troubles at home.* "Away with the cobwebs," Bäuerle said, pouring out a glass of wine for Henrici. Henrici drank it, and the two forced their way through the throng. The bandsmen were playing away on the platform in their shirt-sleeves.

What was this? Suddenly they stopped playing dance tunes and started something else. *German, German is the Rhine, always, always to be mine.* And suddenly there was a roll of drums, and the couples stopped dancing. *A call like thunder rends the air—Like clash of swords and roaring sea. . . .* Bäuerle jumped up. The men in the marquee were standing like a solid wall. They were singing the Song. What was this? They were raising their right arms.

At the end of the first verse Father Allwohn suddenly jumped on the table. He raised his arms like a prophet. "I won't stand it!" he shouted at the top of his voice, pointing to Aschaffenburg. "Here we are celebrating a German festival and there's a Jew in our midst!" Aschaffenburg stared tipsily out on a world that had undergone a sudden transformation. "Have you gone mad?" Bäuerle shouted, seizing Father Allwohn by the leg.

"Out with the Jews!! Out with the Jews!!" Father Allwohn trumpeted through his hands.

His cry was taken up by the throng. It swelled to a hubbub. "Out with the Jews!"

Bäuerle jumped on the platform. "Silence!" he shouted, but his voice was inaudible above the din.

"Out with the Jews!" the Odenwald Society were intoning like a Greek chorus. Young men standing between the tables shouted: "Germany awake!"

For a second Bäuerle saw red. Behind he heard Henrici saying something about a prearranged demonstration. Then he suddenly grew calm. He saw Schrader and Aschaffenburg going towards the exit. "You're staying here!" he called out to them, but they disappeared into the night. A burst of laughter followed them. Dern was standing in the middle of the marquee, his young men around him.

"What are you getting so excited about? Who's doing you any

harm?" Dern called out to Bäuerle, but Johann Kaspar did not answer him. He went over to the band. "Pack up!" he said. Then he went to the edge of the platform.

"Stop!" he shouted. "The festival is over!"

Dern burst out laughing. It was strong, loud laughter. The S.A. men around him burst out laughing too. Soon the whole marquee was laughing. Dern jumped on to the platform. "Stop the festival, my dear Bäuerle? Certainly not!"

Everyone looked up at him as though he had manna in his hands.

"Who are the ruin of the middle classes?" Dern shouted.

"The Jews!" came the answer in chorus.

"Who are the despoilers of the peasants?"

"The Jews!"

"Who rob the workers of their Fatherland?"

"The Jews!"

"Who are the poisoners of our race?"

"THE JEWS!"

The uproar was terrific. Bäuerle was standing next to Dern, alone, gripping the balustrade. So that's what you want, is it? he said to himself. That's enough for you to live on, is it? And suddenly they burst into song. The band joined in. The band actually joined in. Everyone in the marquee raised his right arm in salute. *Clear the streets for the brown battalions. The S.A. march with firm, sure step.* The song resounded from four hundred throats.

Johann Kaspar quietly left the platform. He made his way through the surging mass of singing people. He saw their impassioned faces. A gigantic pulse seemed to be beating right up to the tent roof.

Fräulein Degerloch was standing on the house steps with her hands folded across her comfortable bosom.

"How inspiring!" she said to Bäuerle, who was followed into the hall by Henrici. Neither spoke.

They found Schrader and Aschaffenburg sitting in two armchairs. Aschaffenburg got up and dashed towards Bäuerle. "To

think of it!" he exclaimed. "Five years ago I gave that Father Allwohn money to print his Odenwald folk-tales. And now—" The man burst into tears and clutched Bäuerle by the arm. "Forgive me," he said, "forgive me for causing a disturbance by my presence."

Johann Kaspar walked up and down in silence. What did he care about Aschaffenburg? What he cared about was Germany. What he cared about was the outburst of barbarism out there in the tent, the perfidy they were committing, the madness on which they flourished like maniacs cramming poison down their throats. "No!" he shouted suddenly, stamping his foot as though he wanted to call the dead to witness. "No!!" Then he listened.

Victorious shall we beat the French was the song that came from the marquee.

At that Henrici rose to his feet, went outside to the artesian well and switched off the electric light.

"It's dark," said Irene. "Did you blow the moon out?"

Hanns jumped to his feet. The marquee lay smoothly glistening in the moonlight. The singing to which he had been listening suddenly broke off. And then shouting and cursing started and orders were called out and suddenly the band struck up again, blaring through the night, seeming to shatter the moonlight. Then the band appeared outside the farm, and behind it a black mass of people.

The children ran down the hill. When they reached the crowd they saw Dern standing on a cart. He had thrown off his coat and was in uniform.

"Fellow Germans!" he was shouting. "Yes, it was a prearranged demonstration! Of course it was! Even the band knew all about it, and Party-Comrade Allwohn agreed to sit at the same table as the Jew until we gave the signal. Call it impolite, call it indiscreet, we don't care! We only laugh! We are ready for anything when it's for Germany's sake! We won't have any more festivals in this country which are not at the same time part of our struggle against the Jewish pestilence—a struggle in which, if necessary, we shall not shrink from using the knife!"

Hanns held Irene tight. She was not trembling. "Where's father?" she kept on whispering. "Where's father?"

Then the front door suddenly opened, the light was suddenly switched on and everybody looked at everybody else. Johann Kaspar walked across the yard. He looked calmly at the people before him. He did not climb on to a cart, he had no need to raise himself. He just stood there, alone, and he said, without raising his voice:

"I order Herr Dern to leave Weissenfels immediately. If he wishes to preach hatred there are plenty of halls for him in Siebenwasser. On my land there is no room for that sort of thing."

Simple as the words were, they had their effect. He stood under the gateway, calmly, almost courteously. He looked at the people sadly. The girls' ribbons still fluttered in the night wind, and there were still traces of enjoyment on the faces which were turned towards him.

Had Herr Dern understood him?

"Yes," Dern shouted, "I understood you. But this land on which we're standing isn't your land. It's Germany!"

Bäuerle advanced a few paces. Yes, this land was Germany. And he had no intention of gobbling it up either. But if Herr Dern thought that he was the only one who knew what Germany was he regretted he was under the painful necessity of being so impolite as to call him a dangerous idiot.

For a moment there was dead silence. Then Dern jumped down from the cart. Suddenly he looked small as he walked up to Johann Kaspar. He cracked his riding whip against his leggings, as though to give himself courage. There were white patches on his scarlet face. The two men confronted each other. They stood a few yards apart, as though each were shunning contact with an unpleasant thing. They measured each other with their eyes. "Lackey of the Jews!" hissed Dern. "Is that all you can think of?" Bäuerle replied politely, with a slight bow. "Traitor!" Dern shouted into the night, which was becoming more and more overcast. "Traitor! Lackey of the Jews!" came the chorus behind him.

Johann Kaspar looked at the people from Siebenwasser. He

looked at the peasants, and at the young men particularly. They were opening and shutting their mouths like automatons. Had he come to Germany, had he returned to his native land to have race-hatred shouted at him? Here was Dern, roaring "Traitor!" in his face because he refused to give way to hate. Here they were expelling him from their midst because the Germany he carried in his heart was different from this dancing round the racial calf. It was not anger or rage or indignation over their downfall which overwhelmed him, but sadness, a great sadness, overshadowing everything.

Johann Kaspar quietly raised his hand. He stood there in the moonlight and the clouds chased across the sky like demons and before him were these faces filled with hatred and frenzy.

"So I'm a traitor, am I?" said Bäuerle, and there was no resentment in his voice. "Cast away every decent human instinct, pluck the true Germany from your hearts, dedicate yourselves to blood. But I tell you, he who dedicates himself to blood perishes in it."

He raised his voice. It became hard and threatening.

"Blood is a very special kind of fluid. It's what pacts with the devil are signed in. Don't you men and women see how the devil has you by the throat? Don't you see how he dangles power and might and riches and all the treasures of the world before you, if only you will betray human values? Oh, I know him! He is more cunning and more fiendish than in your fairy tales. I—"

"That's enough!" Dern shouted. "Enough of your old woman's sermons!" He walked towards Bäuerle. "Silly old parson!" he exclaimed, and raised his whip. But a cry was heard from among the crowd and Kilian Kern came hobbling across the yard. His artificial leg thudded on the ground and a hoarse shout came from his lips as he raised his stick. It came whistling down right in Dern's face.

Hanns did not know exactly what happened next. All he knew was that suddenly he found himself in the midst of the raging mob. He saw Irene run and put her arms round her father. Then suddenly he was in the midst of a surging mass of bodies, a frenzied whirl of arms and legs. He hit out right and left. Hen-

rici was by his side. They pulled men's bodies out of the seething mêlée like sacks. There the man lay, surrounded by his raging enemies, prostrate, gasping for breath, bleeding. Hanns seized him, dragged him along the ground, picked him up, threw him over his shoulder and carried him to safety. The servants slammed and noisily bolted the big front door, and outside the crowd shouted and raged and Hanns carried Kilian Kern up to the room next to the bath-room where the bandages and the medicine chest were.

CHAPTER VIII

NOVEMBER came. Heavy mists rose from the valley. Shooting parties crossed the fields with loud reports and cries. Fallen leaves lay rotting on the paths and the wood re-echoed with the axe-blows of men felling the trees. The air was bitter and full of death.

Hanns came from the wood for the midday meal. They had been working up in the wood for three days, a few hundred yards beyond the seven brooks, clearing away trunks which were diseased or had been struck by lightning and were spoiling the forest. Among them were oaks a hundred fifty years old, their branches shattered, victims of the terrific thunderstorms in May.

Hanns stopped in the forage shed and scraped the mud from his boots with a spade. The mud fell to the ground with a squelch, and outside the rain came gently down. From behind the barred windows of the house Fräulein Degerloch started calling out his name. Hanns laughed. Let her get on with it. She could go on a long time before he answered. Since that affair of Kilian Kern he had had his eyes open about the woman. Before wiping Kilian's wounds she had deliberately dipped the cloth into too hot water. The man had shrieked, and started whimpering like a child, and Fräulein Degerloch, the pious old fraud, protested that she had turned the wrong tap on accidentally, though she knew where every single thing in the house was with her eyes shut. Hanns, in his anger, gave her such a push that she tumbled half-way downstairs. He knew well enough what was going on in the old maid's mind. What? Help a political enemy? It wasn't for nothing that

she had attended every meeting since September and lapped up Kalahne's words on the curse of humanitarianism.

"Herr Diefenbach! Herr Diefenbach! Herrrr Diiiiefenbach!"

Hanns stuck his head out of the window. The rain tickled the back of his neck. He saw Fräulein Degerloch behind the barred window. She was almost apoplectic from so much screaming. Where on earth was he? Where on earth had he been? Something important had come for him. Hanns assumed a perfectly blank expression. And what might that be? Fräulein Degerloch was nearly beside herself. "A letter!" she shrieked. "A letter from the Party!!"

Hanns closed the window with deliberate slowness. That finished off Fräulein Degerloch. She grew almost hysterical with excitement. He heard her shrieking that the letter had been brought by special messenger. It was urgent, it was tremendously important. Well, if she thinks I'll go for it like a streak of greased lightning she's very much mistaken. He calmly turned on the hot-water tap and started washing his hands.

So a letter had come from the Party. He had heard nothing from the Party for weeks. Two days after the demonstration which had put an end to Bäuerle's harvest festival he had received notice in writing that he was exempted from duty with the S.A. He had expected it. He hadn't minded, because it gave him more time for Irene and the estate. Since his conflict with Dern, Bäuerle had hardly been of any use at all. He locked himself in his library for hours, would let no one disturb him, and stayed there, brooding. The man's sadness hung over Weissenfels like a dark cloud. Even the happy Irene suffered. Henrici was completely out of hand as well. He had obtained a position as an agricultural expert in Russia and was leaving in April. So it was just as well that Hanns was on the estate. He saw to it that the work went forward and that all the essential things were done. So thoroughly had he grown a part of Weissenfels that he felt there was nothing strange in his giving orders without consulting Bäuerle first. He made sales, took charge of the horses and cattle, the kitchen and the cellars, and behaved in general as if he were managing his

own property. He sensed the excitement all round him only as if it were a distant thunderstorm. He felt sure of himself. He loved and worked.

True, he knew that proceedings were taking place against him in the Party. He had no illusions regarding their outcome. Let them kick him out. In the same circumstances he would behave in exactly the same way again.

He had spent a long time considering whether to write to Gerhard Träger or not, and in the end he had written, though he knew it would be useless. At least let Gerhard hear the truth before Dern twisted it. He spent a long time pondering over his letter. Imaginary conversations with Gerhard—conducted without heat or malice, as befitted the consideration of grave matters—occupied him constantly at his work in the cellars, where the wine seethed and bubbled like mad in the vats, or in the mist and drizzle up in the wood when he was blasting roots with the farm-hands.

Eventually, after spending a happy evening with Irene, he sat down under the white light in his room and wrote to Gerhard while the rain fell outside and the beasts in the stalls were smothered in sleep.

". . . what he did to Bäuerle, and in particular to the postman, whom he allowed to be trampled on, outnumbered though he was by twenty to one, was such an outrage on my sense of decency that I shall willingly undergo any penalty that may be imposed on me for sloppy humanitarianism. Kalahne once spoke of the seamy side which any revolution must have. But no goal can be so noble as to justify such cowardice, such unchivalrousness as that. If you tell me that in such times as this one must not think of oneself, and that one must ignore one's own private views of right and wrong, tell me, in Heaven's name, what standards is one to have other than what one considers decent and right?"

Hanns walked across the farm. It was still raining. The raindrops pattered all round him. As he entered the hall Fräulein Degerloch came panting up the spiral staircase and flung the letter down on the little table in the cloak-room without a word.

She withdrew, bursting with curiosity. Hanns did not give her the satisfaction of opening the letter while she was within sight. He behaved as if he did not notice it. He did not pick it up and open it till he had brushed his hair.

Present yourself at the residence of Party-Comrade Kalahne at four o'clock this afternoon punctually for the purpose of making an explanation.

Heil Hitler!
(signed) Hungrich
Standardleader.

Hanns sat down to lunch. He left Weissenfels an hour later. Irene wanted to drive him down in the car, but he thought that for what lay ahead of him walking would be better.

He reached the town hall square at two o'clock. The stalls were just being taken down round the fountain in the market-place. There was a smell of asters and river fish. Blood-stained pieces of paper lay on the ground, among trampled beetroots and leeks. It was months since Hanns had been in Siebenwasser. The estate has swallowed me up, he said to himself as he left the market and went towards the Café Adelmann. He had one of Bäuerle's English raincoats over his S.A. uniform and was bareheaded. Since he had got used to working in the fields with bare head he could not stand wearing the brown canvas cap, though it was against the rules to go about without it.

Quite mad, he said to himself. Here I am standing outside the Café Adelmann, peering through the window-panes just as I used to when I was crazy about a chorus-girl. He went up on to the café terrace. The chairs and tables had been cleared away, rain dripped from the lamps, and little puddles had formed on the red stone flags. The café was practically empty. He looked at the red plush seats and the gilded mirrors and the green and yellow brandy bottles on the shelves behind the bar and the white sugar basins in their nickel bowls. Suddenly he started. A thought had struck him. Supposing he met Kalahne, who was a regular cus-

tomer here? Supposing I had a talk with him beforehand? Hanns left the terrace at once and went down the wide steps which led to the New Town. Am I frightened? Good lord, no, I'm not frightened. He opened his coat. The rain had left off. A small, metallic streak of sky was visible behind the towers of St. Andrew's Church.

Hanns turned into the Bahnhofstrasse. He looked into the shop-windows, bored. There was a wireless set and here a motor-car, with its bonnet open and paper streamers leading from the various parts of the mechanism to a piece of cardboard on which the various parts were described and explained. Soon his eyes were distracted by the mountainous piles of sausages in the butcher's window, the picture postcards in the stationer's window and the advertisements at the tobacconist's. The life of the street was in full swing, with all its tedious banalities—from the intimate domestic article marked "bargain" at ninety-five pfennigs to the Hansa Store's "people's dinner jacket" at fifty-seven marks.

Hanns felt cross. It was stupid to have come to Siebenwasser so early. He still had two hours to wait—an eternity for a peasant like him. Yes, he felt quite definitely that he had become a peasant. He noticed it by the way he looked at the things in the shops. What on earth is all that stuff for? he wondered. Are we a lot of savages?

He stopped in the station square. It was starting to rain again, and the passers-by were getting in each other's way with their umbrellas. Hanns looked at the clock. Another hour and forty minutes. I must have been extremely agitated to have come down here so early. He considered what to do next. Better go to Mother Döring's, where you could sit and cover pieces of paper with idle drawings. Fool that he was! There were roots to be blasted in the woods, and here he was hanging about and wasting his time.

Wasn't that Kellenberger who just went by? Of course it was. He behaved just as if he didn't know me. And it was I who enlisted him in the S.A. two years ago, just after the matric.

"Hallo, Heinrich!"

Kellenberger walked straight on towards the station. He looked

smart in his uniform, but out in the open country he often used to get a pain in his chest.

"Heinrich!"

Hanns walked a few paces behind Kellenberger and called out again. The man walked faster. You could see him visibly quickening his stride. This was getting better and better. Not only did the fellow refuse to greet his old friend and section-leader but actually behaved as if his ears were stuffed with lead.

Hanns started running. He ran right across the station square and overtook Kellenberger at the bottom of the steps.

"Heil Hitler!" Hanns said, and held Kellenberger by the arm. Kellenberger scarcely turned but tried to go on. He managed to go up a few steps, but Hanns stepped in front of him and blocked his way.

"Are you blind and deaf?" said Hanns, but he felt a hoarseness in his throat and he was aware that he knew more than he let himself think.

Kellenberger had a pale face and reddish hair. The eyes behind his gold-rimmed spectacles were watery.

"So you don't know me any more? Is that it?" said Hanns, laughing. But Kellenberger suddenly looked very miserable. "Listen," he murmured. "Let me go—if anyone sees—I'm very sorry —but—"

"Sees what?" asked Hanns. By this time they were in the archway under the steps and Kellenberger was looking anxiously all round him.

"Sees me talking to you," he whispered in the semi-darkness of the ticket-office.

Hanns must have gone terribly pale, for now Kellenberger was holding him by the arm.

"I really can't help it, Hanns. And I haven't forgotten how decent you were to me at school, and as section-leader too. But our own personal opinions have got nothing whatever to do with it. Many members of the stormtroop sympathize with you and are on your side, but that doesn't make any difference. That won't help you in the least. None of us are allowed to have anything more

to do with you. Hungrich read it out at last night's roll-call. Anyone seen with you will get kicked straight out of the Party—"

Kellenberger, of the thick spectacles and the reddish hair, lawyer's son and student of jurisprudence at Heidelberg University, was not in the least startled or dismayed when Hanns suddenly spat straight at his feet. Oh, no, he was not offended or angry, not in the least. Far from it, all he felt was relief when Hanns left him, immense, heaven-sent relief. Let the poor devil behave proudly about it. So long as no one has seen me talking to him. When he saw Hanns disappear behind the door of the waiting-room he felt very glad.

Kalahne walked along the quay. The rain swept diagonally down across the river and the hilltops were lost in the clouds. Three o'clock struck from St. Andrew's towers.

Kalahne had spent two hours at Weber's, the manufacturer's. Ten industrialists of the neighbourhood had come to listen to him. "Strictly confidential" had been written on the invitation cards that had been sent out. It had been a kind of council that Kalahne had called. Weber had arranged the whole thing. He had been a member of the Party since the September elections, though he had not yet come into the open, contenting himself for the time being with subscribing considerable sums of money in private.

No, it had not been difficult to deal with the gentlemen. At first they plied him eagerly with questions concerning breaking the thraldom of interest and, in particular, about nationalization, both of which were on the Party programme. But when he told them that these were only watch-words, spread as a net to catch the great lower middle-class masses, they suddenly grew quiet and attentive. They lapped up what he said like tame deer eating sugar out of his hand. He told them flatly that he as a National-Socialist set no store whatever by such words as capitalism or proletariat or majority or profit; he told them he actually ridiculed such expressions as phantoms belonging to an obsolete world. The economic bogey had played the star rôle in the State too long. The

gentlemen would not blame the new Movement for keeping as remote as possible from economic affairs. The Movement was concerned not with material things but with a spiritual upheaval of the German people. In the place of the economic man, the type characteristic of last century, they would foster the soldierly type, formed according to the laws of honour and of blood and not according to those of worldly possessions. They would drive the materialistic spirit out of Germany. The Movement declined to undertake any social experiments. All it asked was that every man did his duty, whether employer or employed. The great commonwealth of the German people that they would establish would rest on the laws of soldierliness, Prussian honour and Prussian worth, and if the gentlemen were ready to place their strength at the disposal of the approaching Realm they could be quite sure that the Movement would not forget them on the day it came into power.

The cheque the gentlemen laid on the altar of Germany's future (as Weber so sensibly put it) amounted to ten thousand marks, and Kalahne had it in his pocket now. It had been high time something like this turned up. Eight thousand marks of debts still remained over from the last election campaign, and the printers were actually threatening proceedings. Kalahne laughed. What did he care if the gentlemen, sitting now over their coffee and liqueurs, thought they had placed the Movement under an obligation by paying it this sum of money? They had paid up because they feared the Communists. These ridiculous German Communists were an absolute gold-mine. It was lucky the fellows said such a lot at their meetings and increased their vote at the elections. Every vote for the Communists trebled the significance of the Party. The manufacturers paid up, just as citizens did in the old days when they brought in troops to protect their houses. Let them. One ought actually to intensify their fear of Communism. A frightened bourgeoisie was an excellent stand-by. As soon as they were sure their cash was safe they would hand over the State, the political power, to the Party, having no idea what to do with it themselves. No social experiments. No attack on private property. Certainly, gentlemen, we grant you that, but every-

thing else will be ours—the State power, the executive, the schools, and, above all, the young.

Kalahne stopped still. A tram came clanging across the bridge. The driver surreptitiously nodded to him. He was one of his secret watchers at the city depot. Kalahne went across into the Old Town. He forgot the manufacturers' faces. Something else had come to occupy his mind. In forty minutes the Diefenbach case was going to be dealt with. Pity about the lad, Kalahne said to himself, as he reached his house. The landlady told him there had been a dozen phone calls, and put the list of callers on the table before him. Kalahne ran his eye over the papers and letters that were waiting for him. There was nothing very important, apart from routine matters and the usual necessary trifles that had to be attended to. He took off his overcoat, sat down at his desk and took the file from the drawer. It was an unpleasant business. He would prefer raiding ten Marxist meetings, or spending two more hours allaying the fears of manufacturers, to the business before him now. They could simply have turned the lad out of the Movement and let the matter drop. He no longer belonged to them anyway. That girl had swallowed him up. They could quietly have dropped him into the ranks of men who have no history. But it could not be. Dern demanded his head on a platter. And the lad's mother called on him three times, and raged against her offspring. A petty bourgeois Medea. It was enough to make one sick, but what could Kalahne do? He could not save the lad. Dern's prestige had suffered far too much as it was, and in the masses' eyes Dern was the Party. So the case had been reported to Munich, and here was their decision. As was only to be expected, the lad was to be ignominiously expelled. Kalahne turned over the pages. He felt no sympathy for Diefenbach. What happened to the lad was a matter of indifference to him. The Party wasn't a psychotherapeutic institution; so far as the Movement was concerned the human background of the affair was completely uninteresting. All the same Kalahne had not been able to help hoping that when the decision from Munich arrived it would be less severe than this. It was a crazy feeling, but sometimes, when

he thought things over quite quietly in his own mind, he could not help feeling solidarity with Party-Comrade Diefenbach. It must be a relic of humanitarianism from his student days, of course. He stamped these thoughts down as though they were a lot of dangerous ants, but they constantly returned to torment him. And now, as he once more read through Gerhard Träger's letter and the hard sentence of the Party tribunal, he felt oppressed by the thought that it was so absolutely essential to sacrifice the lad. Had he not been actuated by decent feelings? No, Kalahne said to himself, a thousand times no. He damaged the Party, so his act was evil. Enough of this humanitarian twaddle. He picked up the officer's letter. What Träger said was painful, was tragic, yet it was the truth.

"For a long time I considered intervening on Hanns Diefenbach's behalf, believe me. But in the interests of our goal I refrained from doing so. The people must be welded together into a single, united block, and not the slightest flaw must be permitted. At every turn of Prussian history there lie the corpses of hundreds of youths like this. But the sergeant-major is more important than these, Kalahne. Without the sergeant-major there can be no victory. It is fearful, and you can believe me when I say I am shattered by this awful necessity."

Kalahne laid the letter aside. It is a private feeling. I shall choke it down, annihilate it. We have no more right to private feelings. For the heroic man chokes down the feelings in his heart, so that his arm may be strong and his brain sober and as cool as ice.

Hanns walked straight through the waiting-room. In his anger and disgust he went all the way up to the platform, then down through the subway and out on the other side of the town. He saw Kellenberger's face before his eyes the whole time. He could not shake it off. Even if he had laid his head in Irene's lap he could not have shaken it off. He went to Mother Döring's and ordered a brandy. The waiter took the order but did not come back. After waiting ten minutes Hanns left the place. He understood. He sat down on a seat in the harbour and the wind

blew the rain in his face and it was cold and everything was terribly evil. Hanns was alone, all alone on the iron seat. He was not thinking of Irene, and the fields of Weissenfels were far away. All he saw was the ferry-boat yonder, moving sombrely through the mist. It was a death ship. And with it there came fear. It was a terrifying fear, quite objectless. What could they do to him? He had work, he was loved, Bäuerle was good to him. But that didn't help in the least. To work and to love were not enough. One remained solitary, an individual still—while every day their numbers swelled. They were no longer solitary individuals, alone with themselves, for they had a giant roof over their heads, and they sang songs, and when they marched it was like a great living body.

You don't belong to us any more. . . . So far as we're concerned you're dead . . . it's all up with you. . . .

Once more he saw Kellenberger before his eyes, and not only Kellenberger, but all of them, all the others as well. Suppose to-morrow *they* were the whole people, what then? A convulsive movement shook his frame. He kicked his shin-bone with his heel and felt the pain as a blessing and would have liked to weep, if only he could. But there was wild laughter in his brain and not tears. Let them say whatever they liked, he was all right. Yes, he was all right. He saw Irene in his mind's eye and felt his home was with her, was anywhere where she was. But then the other arose in him, the other which had been sleeping for so long. He thought it was dead, but it arose within him now. There arose before him suddenly the songs and the flags and the oaths he had sworn and the bitter-sweet dream he had dreamed with his comrades, and with Gerhard. Alas! he was breaking with the pain of it, and he forgot the seamy side and he forgot Kern, and all he saw was the flag waving in the wind, and the great light in the distance towards which they were all marching. Hanns closed his eyes. He did not feel the rain that was beating in his face. He was part of a marching column, and Jürgen was in front and thousands were all round him, and no-one asked questions about him, he was just part of it all, and when they moved he moved too. This is what

they were taking away from him. They were casting him out of their ranks, and he was left standing in the mud at the edge of the road, and he heard them marching silently by, as though he were not there.

He sprang to his feet. He ran across the bridge and down the street, and when he got to the house Kalahne lived in and hurried up the fusty staircase he felt that he had overtaken them all the same.

The landlady had been given orders to put young Diefenbach in the kitchen and let him stay there until Kalahne gave the sign that he was to be brought into the room. When she heard his steps she hurried out to the landing and pointed towards the kitchen, but he dashed past her like a maniac, straight to the door of the room in which all the leaders were gathered. She was just going to call out, but there was a sudden outcry inside the room, so she hurried back to the kitchen and sat behind the chink in the door, and her throat muscles were tense with excitement. Then there was a sudden silence.

Dr. Kalahne's sharp voice rang out. If only nothing happens, she said to herself. Such young blood. It would be a shame. Oh, lord, what times we are living in.

Hanns Diefenbach opened the door and started back with a shriek. Before his eyes he saw his mother, sitting at the table between Kalahne and Dern. Her face was ashen-pale. She rose to her feet, and everything else in the room grew hazy.

"Here I am," Hanns shouted, and advanced a pace towards the table.

"And here am I to witness the disgrace of your life," said Hertha Diefenbach, coming forward from behind the table. Wasn't that Father Allwohn who was supporting her? She stood before him, and those were her eyes as they had been many years before, but they were grey and icy, and that was her mouth, but her lips were drained of blood.

What happened next was like an evil dream. His mother, supported by Allwohn, went to one side, and suddenly before him

there was a great seething, brown mass, which started moving as though there were a sea beneath it, and there, the other side of the sea, where there was *terra firma,* was Dr. Kalahne, reading something out, and when he had finished a man appeared and came towards him over the sea, and he looked like a rat. He had spectacles on and his teeth protruded over his lips. And now he came for him, and— Oh, God, why did You send the rat?— The man laid his hands on him:—oh, my throat, my throat—and there was a sound of rending and he felt as if his skin were being torn off. There was the rending sound again. No! No! You blackguards! Blackguards!

The door slammed behind him with a crash like thunder. The house quaked and the steps led straight down into the abyss. He staggered, collapsed, fell down them. He might have been flying.

In the room upstairs Standardleader Hungrich laid Section-Leader Diefenbach's badges on the table. Then, with a smart click of his heels, he said to the motionless woman:

"Party-Comrade, I admire your Spartan behaviour."

At five o'clock Henri Jockel telephoned to Weissenfels. They should send a car at once. He had the young man here in his office. He wouldn't answer any questions. He had given the lad some of his own brandy. When Johann Kaspar entered the Blue Bear Inn he said nothing. He took Hanns by the hand and led him out into the rain. As they took the first bend the clouds parted and the open sky behind Weissenfels was like a purple bowl.

Irene had been standing in the rain for an hour, waiting. She counted the minutes. Over and over again she said to herself: By the time that cloud of mist reaches that field over there on the right they will be here. But many clouds of mist passed over to the right, and Irene was still standing in front of the door, and the anxiety within her bobbed up and down like a white, fleeting light.

Ever since Hanns left for Siebenwasser she had been torn by

anxiety. She worked for two hours in the ironing-room, and afterwards with Fräulein Degerloch in the dairy, and it helped but little. She felt the whole time as though an unpleasant fate were piling up out there behind the clouds. Oh, yes, when Hanns left laughingly for Siebenwasser this afternoon she had controlled herself all right. Of course, it was just a formality, having to go and see Kalahne; what else could it be? Of course she believed him. How on earth could she doubt anything Hanns said? All the same she was consumed with anxiety, real, feminine anxiety. Could it be just because she was alone?

This reflection consoled her for a long time. It was only distance from her beloved, she reassured herself, that made her feel restless and nervous. This new proof of her dependence on Hanns actually gave her joy. But suddenly she felt stranger than ever. She could not stay in the room. There was no air, and every now and then she felt giddy.

She went up the little staircase to the library, where her father was, and sat close beside him and asked him what it was that made her so frightened. Then she told him how much she was in love with Hanns. The words came bubbling out of her, without any preparation, and uttering them was like a liberation, and she kept nothing back, and her father spoke to her kindly, and when she told him she was going to have a child he kissed her. And she went on talking, and did not omit a single hour of happiness she had spent with Hanns. Now that she felt so dreadful her father should know everything, she said. He spoke, quietly and carefully, as was his wont, and practically and to the point, and he suggested that when the child had come she and Hanns should go away from Siebenwasser and stay at some place where Hanns could study. But she laughed at that and said, no, Hanns wanted to be nothing but a peasant, and when she felt her father understood her she went up to him and asked him whether he were angry with her and Hanns for being so silly. He gave her no answer, but she knew he understood. She started luxuriating in her happiness. She wanted nothing in the world, she said, but to live and to work, and that was all Hanns wanted too, and now he was down in Sie-

benwasser, breaking off with Kalahne for good, and as soon as he was back everything would be all right. Her father smiled and said she was like Juana and went with her to the dining-room, where her mother's picture hung on the dark, panelled wall. And all round her mother were the portraits of the Bäuerles, men with hard, sharp faces, earnest eyes and unbending mouths, and her father talked about them and said that no Bäuerle had ever acted contrary to the dictates of his conscience; that was their heritage, and Irene should nourish it and live by it. And they stood before the picture and Irene felt her father's arm round her and Fräulein Degerloch came running in. Herr Jockel was on the telephone, she said, and it was about Hanns. They dashed downstairs. Trembling, she sat by her father's side. "Is he alive? Is he alive?" she shrieked as her father picked up the receiver, and when he nodded she suddenly felt ill. She heard the car driving across the yard. Cold waves surged through her body. She dashed up to her room, and lay down on her bed, and as she lay she felt her child moving within her, expanding and contracting like a heart.

Later I went downstairs, and I looked sick and ill, and Fräulein Degerloch asked me if I would like some tea, but everything seemed to be behind a veil, people, the house, the farm and the stables and all. And standing outside the front door I didn't feel the rain at all. I just stood there. Perhaps it was an hour, perhaps more. It seemed to last for ever.

They came and I stood apart and only looked at Hanns. He was as white as chalk and he was holding his hand to his throat. We walked across the yard in silence, and I stumbled twice, so heavy were my feet. When we were upstairs we sat down, and went on sitting, just sitting, for a long time. It got dark outside, but the mist remained white.

And we went on waiting until he spoke. And when he did speak —he whispered, and his voice was quite hoarse—it made our blood freeze. I only looked at Hanns, but I still remember how my father suddenly made an exclamation and started walking up and down the room, saying nothing but: "My God! My God!" But Hanns went on sitting in his chair, clutching his fingers as though he

wanted to tear himself to pieces. And then suddenly I couldn't stand it any more, but simply dashed over to him and held him tight, and called out, I do not know what I called out, but I think it was just: "Hanns!"

For a long time it seemed as if he noticed nothing, he was so cold, but suddenly, it was like a miracle, I felt his hand on me—it was the first time he touched me—and then at last he looked at me. Oh, I have never felt so happy as I did then. And then when we went away and father opened the door for us and we went upstairs to my room all I could say was: "I am with you, Hanns, I am with you."

Irene lay awake. The room was sunk in darkness. Irene did not hear the rain or the wind in the forest or the branches of the nut-tree that kept on beating against the roof. The breathing of the sleeping youth beside her was the only sound she heard.

Johann Kaspar was still downstairs in his room. He switched off the lights, and went out into the yard. It was a close, starless night. The mountains lay in profound darkness. It was right that it should be so. For a man grieving for his people avoids the light.

CHAPTER IX

DERN was raging up and down the room, striking out with his riding-whip at the table, the chairs, the sideboard, even the palm in the bowl next to the sofa. Then he stopped still and stood motionless, a mountain of flesh and muscle, his light blue eyes staring at the table on which there lay a letter, a letter from Munich. A friend had written to him, a friend who stood close to the Leader and knew what he was talking about.

. . . I can't prevent it. Träger will be coming to you in January, for an official visit of inspection. He's a damned apostle of righteousness. So if you've got anything you want to hide you'd better have a quick clean-up. . . .

Dern looked away. He saw red. The big, heavy man was struggling for breath.

"I'll—I'll—" he began, furious, but once more he felt impelled to look at that accursed letter lying on the table. What else did it say? What else?

P.S. Somebody in Siebenwasser must have blown the gaff on you.

"That's that bloody little cripple Kalahne," Dern roared, and his riding-whip crashed down on the table, whirled round against the wall and sent the green glass bowl flying from the sideboard to smash on the floor with a loud report.

The post office official breathed more easily. He listened. Nobody was coming. He had turned them all out of the house, his wife and son and Hertha too. Hungrich was the only one he would talk to, because Lord knows Hungrich was in the same mess.

He started trampling up and down again, splintering the broken glass beneath his feet. Official visit of inspection. Official visit of

inspection, indeed. Well, just to let you know, twelve thousand six hundred marks are missing from the cash-box—twelve thousand marks which I can't account for. Dern said these words aloud. Then he started shouting again. Am I a clerk? Am I a bookkeeper? I'm a soldier! *Your* soldier!

He stopped in front of the Leader's picture. He looked at the dedication in the Leader's own handwriting. He looked into the Leader's eyes, and suddenly burst out laughing, and his laughter was terrifying. The ideas the little doctor gets into his head, going nosing around in Munich! The Leader remains true to his friends. Yes, true to his friends. For thirteen years I've served you like a dog and now a stinking little cripple who's not even man enough to be able to take a woman properly comes along and just because of a few hundred mark notes—

Dern felt happy again. One look into the Leader's eyes and all troubles fade away.

He helped himself to a brandy. It was the eighth glass he had had that afternoon, and the drink that had served previously but to nourish his fury now fell like balm upon his soul.

Hungrich found the post office official in a state of blissful intoxication. Dern was sitting at the table with the bottle of brandy by his side, scrawling away on a piece of paper. On the left of the sheet he saw "12,600" written. Then there was a vertical line and the words "And in Siebenwasser there are only 11,397 people" were on the right.

Hungrich asked what it was all about. Dern handed him the letter with a chuckle, but the chuckle died away on his lips when he saw Hungrich's face. It turned green and his lips went white.

"What's the matter with you?" Dern said, quickly pouring out a glass of brandy. Hungrich declined it.

"This is the little cripple's doing," he hissed. "The little swine!"

Dern leaned comfortably back in his chair and laughed.

"The ideas the fellow gets into his head! I'm going to Munich tomorrow, first thing tomorrow morning!"

"Useless," said Hungrich. "They won't let you in."

Dern sprang to his feet.

"Not let me in?" he shouted. "Me—with my record?"

"That won't help you, I'm afraid. They've got other things to think about now."

"My Leader is always there for me," said Dern, standing by the table and preening himself.

"In three weeks' time, perhaps, but not now. You know they are negotiating, don't you?"

"Negotiating? Adolf Hitler doesn't negotiate!"

Dern turned away and began striding solemnly up and down the room.

Hungrich polished his spectacles.

"You're a child," he said. "You only believe what it says in the Party papers. But I tell you they're negotiating. And to set your mind at rest, I'll tell you why; in the first place, because that damned Schleicher took nearly two million votes away from us and, in the second place, because there's no money left. That's common sense, isn't it? And I tell you they're quite right to do it too. You know yourself that something's got to happen, and pretty quickly too. We can't go on putting the people off from six months to six months indefinitely. And you know what chance a rising's got as long as old Hindenburg's there. Very well, negotiate then—with the capitalists, with the Conservatives, with the Junkers, with the whole lot of them so far as I'm concerned, as long as it works. Another Schleicher election like this and we'll be the Social-Democrats of the Right, and the whole dream will be over."

Dern was standing in the middle of the room, staring motionless at Hungrich. Outside the daylight was fading and a grey twilight was sinking over the city.

"Come, come, my dear Otto, just you think a bit, and leave that brandy bottle alone for a while. Just listen to me for a minute. If they're negotiating, the people they need in the Party now are those who've got connections with the others—the Reichswehr, I mean, and the industrialists, and the coal magnates in the east, and so on and so forth. That's obvious, isn't it? And just think for another minute and a great light will dawn on you. This Träger is one of them, isn't he? He's got a thousand links with

the Army, hasn't he? And behind him there's a whole clique in the Party who can't stand people like us. In their eyes we're still the sergeant-majors we used to be, and there's no use flying in a rage about it, because there it is."

It had got dark and the two men could scarcely see each other. The street-lamps alone cast their unquiet rays into the room.

". . . and what is more, Kalahne knows all about it. The brute doesn't calculate at all badly. Secret reports about us have been going to Munich for weeks past, I tell you, all about our private lives and how often you get drunk, Otto—come, come, don't lose your temper—and what bills you run up at the tailor's and at the Blue Bear and at Mother Döring's, and that you've bought yourself a piano and the little Opel two-seater, and all about Hertha Diefenbach's jewellery, and that striking new marble monument on your mother's grave. I tell you the fellow shrinks at nothing, not even my little hunt—"

"Little hunt, you call it?" came the voice out of the darkness. "That's what you call a little hunt, is it? And what about all those guns and the motor-cycle and the new geyser in the bath-room and the swastika of forget-me-nots in the garden and the Pilsner. . . . ?"

"All right, all right, I'll grant you all your recreations too. After all we risk our lives daily for an ideal. One must have a little relaxation after it all!"

Neither spoke. Their eyes sought each other in the darkness. Each, unknown to the other, had folded his arms.

It was a long time before the post office official moved.

"So you think Träger will come here?"

"Unfortunately I do."

"And then?"

"There will be a solemn official reprimand. Kalahne will be given control of the cash and we'll be in his hands entirely."

Words came from Dern's mouth as though he were choking. "So—you—think—we'll—be—"

"Sergeant-majors like before," said Hungrich with a laugh.

"And when the day comes?"

"The little cripple will decide whether you become a postmaster or not after campaigning for thirteen years."

There were three footsteps in the darkness and Hungrich felt Dern clutching him.

"Listen!" he yelled. "The cripple must be cleared out! Clear the little cripple out for me!"

He collapsed on to a chair.

"Postmaster?" he said. "You must be mad! Postmaster? Nothing but postmaster, indeed!"

Schickedanz had come home tired from the office. He had worked till evening editing and re-writing Father Allwohn's essay on "Vivisection and Nordic Man." It was an appalling jumble of anti-Semitism and love of animals, but Kalahne insisted on its appearing. During the last few weeks the political editing of the *Alarm* had grown tame. The magnificent attacks on Herr von Papen which Kalahne had been making last summer had been silenced. Those colossal denunciations of Big Industry and the Junkers had been stifled overnight. Schickedanz had had his heart in his work then all right. It had been a pleasure to be alive when he and Kalahne jointly denounced the forces of reaction in every issue. Never had the Movement been so joyously alive as in July, when the Party had seemed to be arising against the ancient powers of property and capital. Millions had come over to them then, millions of small peasants and workers, and above all, the young, and they had stood ready to break out against the strongholds in the land and raze them to the ground, just as their forebears had freed themselves from the Bundschuh before they were betrayed. But in November there had been that dreadful set-back. A general had arisen to stem the tide, and the middle classes had dashed to him in masses, out of fear of the rising anti-capitalist flood. And suddenly Kalahne put the stopper on and nothing more appeared about the exalted exploiters of the people, and instead it was the Jewish, the Marxist, the Bolshevik peril that was splashed in red ink all over the page.

Schickedanz said nothing. He understood nothing about politics, and he was in debt besides. He had the leading article—a discreet obeisance before the German entrepreneur, the Prussian military aristocracy, and the landowner of Neudeck[1]—set up in type. He bit his tongue and didn't think about it but drank and was glad of every extra five marks that Kalahne allowed him over and above his salary. Kalahne was inscrutable, as inscrutable as the New Year that was slowly getting under way, as inscrutable as the mist outside the window.

Schickedanz took the boiling water from the primus stove and made himself some tea. He had treated himself to two ounces of ham today, though he was three months in arrears with his rent and the bill that had accumulated at Mother Döring's was a long one.

He drank some tea and started eating. He went over to the sofa with his mouth full. He felt for the bottle of rum behind the Oriental drapery. It warmed one. Old Frau Naumann hadn't put the heating on, of course, because of the hundred and forty-five marks she was still owed. And his books were pawned, as well as his trunk and his camera and the little Empire clock that had come down to him from his grandmother.

Schickedanz covered himself in a blanket and started reading. Every evening he brought a pile of newspapers home with him from the office—the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, the *Vossische Zeitung*, the *Berliner Tageblatt* and the *Völkischer Beobachter*. The flow of words made him feel better. How splendidly these gentlemen all rode their respective steeds. The *Frankfurter Zeitung* was always mounted on the white palfrey of reason. The way youth was apostrophized, for instance, was simply laughable. Become a personality. Be responsible in all your actions. Schickedanz considered whether to eat the second piece of ham or to save it till tomorrow. Then he started reckoning. In 1914 I was twelve years old, and then came the war. In 1918 I was sixteen, and then came the defeat and the Kaiser hopped it and the French occupied my home in the Rhineland. In 1920 came the inflation and the days

[1] Hindenburg. (Translators' note.)

of profiteering and smuggling coffee and soap into unoccupied territory. When I was eighteen—in 1923—there was the struggle in the Ruhr and you had billions to spend. When I was twenty-one I was at the university, hungry. From 1924 to 1925, no money and not enough to eat. When I was twenty-three I took my doctor's degree with a thesis on the drama of *Roswitha of Gandersheim*. Got to know Kalahne. Unemployed. Came to Siebenwasser in 1928. *The Gay Vineyard*. Four hundred marks a month, of which I had to pay two hundred to the Winzer Bank in repayment of my student's loan. Left the newspaper in 1929. Free-lance work. H'm . . . 1930, depression; 1931, depression; 1932, depression. The *Alarm*. A hundred and twenty marks a month.

Schickedanz took a drink. He threw the *Frankfurter Zeitung* on the floor. Become a personality. Be responsible in all your actions. But, gentlemen, we have not yet even started to live.

He threw one newspaper after another to the floor. This man of thirty was seized with a terrific hatred. His youth lay behind him, a youth of jockeying between unpaid bills and bailiffs, going hungry in unheated rooms and writing high-flown newspaper articles. A personality, indeed. Or had he been too decent to become a personality? He preferred drinking and lying and obeying Kalahne, though he hated him. He wanted to hear no more of it. He had not been to the war and he was not in the peace. He was only groping his way through a spiritual no-man's-land.

Only once in his life had he really had faith. That had been last summer, when Kalahne launched his furious attack on the Junkers and the capitalists. It had made his blood tingle, and often in his dreams he saw the land afire and the peasants and workers marching under the black flag. But that was over now. The ship was bound somewhere else. I'm not so stupid as not to notice it. Half a million dead Jews won't make a German summer. And you can't attack the priests alone either. He picked up the *Alarm*. It was tomorrow's number. Tomorrow was Sunday. "The German Transformation," was the headline that met his eye. For the tenth time today he read the lines:

The transformation of the German people makes the centuries hum. Roman-Jewish Christianity was a false development of the German spirit, and a vile development too. It shrivels at the touch of the young, awakened generation. The miracle wrought by the Treaty of Versailles was this. The defeat struck us to our very roots, and a whole people is now returning to its true roots.

"My dear Kalahne," Schickedanz exclaimed. "My dear Kalahne. Back to Herr von Papen's roots you mean! And good luck to you, you crook!"

But soon he bent down, picked up the bottle and went on drinking.

The bell rang.

The landlady, seventy-year-old daughter of a privy councillor, who defended herself valiantly against death so long as Herr Hitler had not yet vanquished the Jews and the Reds, opened the door. It was Party-Comrade Hungrich. "Oh, so you can afford ham, can you?" she whispered to Schickedanz as she left the room. Hungrich was in the room before Schickedanz, who just managed to hide the bottle of rum behind the sofa, had time to answer.

The man stood looking all round him, like a respectable bourgeois in a brothel.

"Are the walls all right?" he asked, tapping them.

Schickedanz laughed.

"The old woman's practically deaf," he said. "She won't hear anything till the bells ring and Adolf—"

"So you've been having one or two, have you?" said Hungrich with a grin.

"Yes, I'm drinking."

He fetched the bottle of rum. They drank it neat.

Half an hour later Schickedanz was nodding his head in assent. Hungrich, damned rat, was staring at him from the other side of the haze of his drunkenness.

"So you know the lad?" he was saying. "I mean, you know him well enough for him not to suspect anything?"

"Of course; he often used to come to Jürgen's. A nice fellow!"

"And he told you about the letters?"

"Yes, you crook!"

"Thank you. So you'll do it?"

"How much will you give me?" Schickedanz had sprung to his feet and hammered on the table with his fist. "First of all I want to know how much you'll give me, you bastard!"

"Two hundred marks."

"No! My soul is worth more than that!"

"Poor chap—a hundred down and a hundred fifty on delivery."

"Hand over the hundred!"

The note fluttered down on the table.

Fifty bottles of rum and four thousand years in purgatory. He picked up the money.

"I'm a beast," he said aloud. "I'm a brute-beast."

Then he burst out laughing. The alcohol had him in its grip. His brain, his heart, his soul seemed whirling in inextricable confusion, a hellish brew.

"And Kalahne—it serves Kalahne right. He's a betrayer, you're a betrayer, we're all betrayers. And what's it all for, you rat, can you tell me that?"

"If you must know, it's for the sake of moral cleanliness," Hungrich said.

They drank and laughed. A bottle of brandy suddenly appeared from Hungrich's pocket. How it flowed. How it burned your throat.

It was late at night when the two went downstairs. Schickedanz was staggering.

"My feet are quite round," he said thickly. "They're as round as bullets. It's a lucky sign, you know, very lucky!"

Hungrich did not answer. He took Schickedanz by the back of the neck and banged his head on the wall, not too hard and not too soft.

"You know what will happen to you if you don't hold your tongue?" he said.

"Of course," said Schickedanz. "I know you, don't I?"

Suddenly he felt quite cold inside.

"Listen," he said to the surveyor. "Tell me this. Why do you always come to me when you want some dirty work done?"

He was alone in the rain. The night was cold and grey.

"Eh?" Schickedanz called out once more. Then he went back upstairs. There was still plenty of brandy in the bottle. He poured himself out a tumblerful. Then he turned out the light.

He undressed in the dark, because he felt full of nausea.

The hills of Württemberg were covered with snow. The wood lay beneath a magic mantle of hoar-frost. The fields were asleep. Nothing but the footprints of an occasional wild animal broke the endless white expanse.

Hanns went to the workshop early in the morning. He locked the door, covered the window, and put his pots of paint down on the lathe. He had violet and scarlet and a delicate orange. That will do for the sky, he said to himself. I'll have a sky of violet and scarlet. He tried the colours. Then he started fitting the pieces of wood together. There were four of them, two for the sides, one for the head and one for the feet. The pieces for the sides were flat, smooth-planed boards. He shaped their ends into notches, which dovetailed into the head and foot sections. These were arched rather like a lyre, or even more like the calyx of a flower, growing thicker towards the bottom. A number of arched rockers were attached to it at the thick part, so that it could be moved to and fro on the floor until it began to rock by itself.

Hanns bent smiling over the cradle. The wood was hard and knotted. He started planing it. He sat over the work for a whole hour. The shavings flew across his fingers. Outside the window the snow kept on falling from the roof. When Hanns had finished planing he began staining the wood. It would need three coats of varnish, but would be dry by evening. Then he would be able to paint a picture on it—a violet and scarlet sky, and later a Mother and Child in delicate orange.

He put the cradle down on the floor, near the stove. Then he went over to the bench where the paints were. Was there

enough scarlet? He picked up the pot. After lunch he would go down to Siebenwasser to order more paint.

He had not been to Siebenwasser since that afternoon at Kalahne's. He could scarcely remember it now. The whole thing lay behind a veil. He averted his head. He didn't want to look. He wanted to forget those weeks. He was ashamed of them.

That morning, after awakening with Irene beside him, he had gone quietly and calmly about his work. He had fed the cattle and repaired the separator in the dairy and bottled half a barrel of wine in the cellar. Nobody worried him with questions. Not that it made any difference. He would not have answered in any case. But in the night, after all the lights in the house were out, he took his old S.A. shirt from the cupboard and put it on, and laid his tattered old song-book on his knees and sang. Yes, sang. He sang all the songs to which he had marched through the woods in the evening and across the fields and through the city streets in the daytime. And a quivering came into his feet and he rose and started marching up and down the room and he raised his right arm and suddenly he felt his comrades were around him. He was overwhelmed, and he cast himself on his bed, where he lay and wept. "What have I done?" he called out. "I have lost my life." And he forgot the shame that they had done to him, and he forgot Hungrich's outstretched hand and his mother's icy pallor. But he heard the singing and the great united chorus that was Germany, and he saw the flag fluttering in the breeze. In his dismay he turned once more to Träger's letters, which he fetched out from their place of banishment at the bottom of his wardrobe. And the words seized him once more, and he fell prostrate beneath their spell.

Sympathy is the religion of the weak. Let your heart be cold and buckle on your shoulder-strap tighter. The feelings we beat down inside us now will be compensated for later. Do not look at the wreckage that must strew our path. Our goal is greater than the wrong that we must do. Private life no longer exists for us. All we know is blind obedience.

He cried out in anguish as he read these lines again. Oh, Gerhard, what have I done? I have gone fearfully astray. I gave way to my feelings as an individual man.

In his dismay he actually began letters to Träger, letters appealing to him to get them to take him back. He was willing to do the most humble, the most menial work. He would rather be a criminal than lose Germany. As he watched the letters being consumed by the flames to which he consigned them he would dearly have liked to follow them. Hanns lay awake for night after night. He did not think of Irene, from whom he hid everything. In his hours of solitude anguish welled up within him. His sureness of himself, his determination to be a peasant had vanished, leaving nothing in its wake but a terrible fear of being an outcast and dying in the outer darkness. He stormed and raged against himself for many days and nights and wept like a dog in search of its leash. He felt no more shame, and his pride was burnt down to the last stump.

There came a morning when Irene collapsed in the hall. She sat in a chair, ashen pale, writhing as if pain were attacking her with a thousand daggers. They carried her up to her room and undressed her and laid her in her bed, and she lay there as pale as death. Bäuerle, beside himself, fell upon Hanns and seized his head and shrieked: "What have you done to my child? What have you done to my child?" But Irene raised herself, though her face was distorted with pain, and she said: "He loved me, loved me more than anyone else in the world," and then she sank back on the pillow and her head lay still in the dark frame of her hair. She tried to smile and stretched out her hand and said: "Hanns, Hanns, stay with me, Hanns!"

And he stayed with her and held her hand, and dared not move even after she fell asleep.

In that hour he once more felt strength within himself—no longer the hasty, imperative strength of his youth but a silent, quiet forcefulness within. It was the birth of manhood in him.

When Bäuerle came into the sick-room with Dr. Wachtel he was surprised at the youth's calm demeanour. He went up to him and offered him his hand.

A fortnight after this attack Irene was sent to Heidelberg. Dr. Wachtel said she was in no danger but recommended that she be kept under observation in a nursing home. Kidney trouble was not to be trifled with, and it was better to be on the safe side.

Hanns and Irene parted calmly and confidently. He travelled in the car with her as far the first bridge. "Have no fear about us," Irene said, and he kissed her and walked quietly up the snow-covered hillside, back to the estate and his work.

Christmas was over and a new year had begun and Irene was still in Heidelberg. Bäuerle drove to the nursing home every day. He no longer thought of anything but his child. He kept on storming the doctors with questions, but all the satisfaction he got was that there was no acute danger but that one must be careful and have patience. In the evening, sitting with Hanns, he talked of Irene only. He spoke of Juana too, but that was the same thing. "If I had to lose her again," he said, "I could not survive it." Hanns nodded his head in assent. He could not survive it either. And thus the two men lived with but one thought. When Henrici talked about the political situation they impatiently shook him off. The only reality they recognized was the threat to Irene.

After lunch Hanns set off for Siebenwasser. He put on his ski and went down the winding road. The sun pierced the clouds, and an icy wind swept across the shining snow. Hanns reached the river in a few minutes. He took off his ski by the weir and continued his way on foot. After the first bend the city appeared before his eyes. Roof beyond roof appeared beneath a white mantle of snow and the dove-grey towers of St. Andrew's rose solemnly against the glittering sky.

When Hanns entered the shop it was empty. He stopped in front of the show-case containing the paints. The show-case was in the shape of a circle, divided up into a lot of little triangular-shaped compartments all pointing towards the centre. When you moved the case around the colours mingled into one another and formed strange, fantastic hues. Slowly Hanns started selecting the colours he wanted. He regarded the various paints as in some

way bound up with mankind, as if they were secret elixirs exorcising death. After a quarter of an hour he had chosen ten colours, ranging from deepest black to brilliant white. He could already visualize how he would paint the earth beneath the sky, and the seasons and the whole life of man.

When the shop-door opened Hanns didn't turn round. He was so immersed in choosing his colours that he didn't even notice the assistant laughing.

"Well, and how does my little account stand with you today?"

"Eleven marks seventy-five pfennigs."

"Here you are, this is to settle it."

Money appeared on the counter. Coins clinked right in front of Hanns's nose. The salesman started crossing out figures in an account book.

On the left-hand side of the cradle I could paint a small garden with a tree on it, with a lot of fruit, and a mother picking it for the children. I wonder whether the green paint's poisonous? Or I could paint the meadows ochre. That might look very jolly."

"Very well, my dear Rehbein, now you go and fetch a basket. No, two baskets, and just put twenty-five bottles of rum in them and ten bottles of brandy—German brandy, of course."

A hundred-mark note was put down on the counter. The salesman picked it up.

"Have you come into a fortune?" said the salesman, baring his teeth.

"Yes, a nice little legacy from Rothschild!"

They both laughed loudly. Hanns revolved the show-case containing the paints. Rehbein opened a trap-door and went down into the cellar.

Suddenly Hanns felt a light pressure on his arm. He turned. It was Schickedanz, in uniform.

Schickedanz extended his hand.

"Shake hands quickly, man, before Rehbein comes back! Besides I don't attach any importance to it either way, and so far as I'm concerned I don't care who knows it. You can tell anybody you like!"

"Thank you," said Hanns. "It's really not necessary. I'm managing to get along quite nicely as it is."

He gathered the colours he had chosen. Rehbein came hurrying up the steps. Hanns paid and, as he put the change back in his pocket, felt a hand touching his and slipping a piece of paper into it.

"Good afternoon," he said, and heard Schickedanz calling out "Good-bye" behind him. Two hundred yards down the road, shortly before the gate leading into the Old Town, he took the piece of paper from his pocket.

"Expect you at once at Petermann's pub," he read. "Very important."

Hanns stopped still and considered for a few minutes. Then he walked on towards the centre of the city.

Schickedanz arrived half an hour later, in mufti. He had a broad-brimmed hat on his thick, rather bloated head.

"This is fine," he said. "We've got a chance of saying how-d'you-do properly at last. This place is safe. Old Petermann keeps his mouth shut. Doesn't he?" he called out, whereupon Herr Petermann bowed from behind the bar and said the best thing a German could do nowadays was to keep his mouth shut.

Schickedanz sat down next to Hanns and looked at him.

"A bit pale," he said. "But don't you worry."

Hanns inquired the object of this interview. Schickedanz folded his arms and planted his elbows firmly on the table.

"You must know that you've still got a lot of friends."

"Oh?"

"And they have been active in Munich on your behalf. They can't put up with a splendid fellow like you being trampled on by a man like Dern."

"Oh?"

"And these friends have put the whole thing before Gerhard Träger, and he sends word to you that you're not to be downhearted. Some big changes are in the wind, some very big changes. And when things have got going your case will be quashed."

Hanns said nothing. He would very much have liked to take his departure. But he said:

"What you say is of no consequence to me."

Schickedanz rested his head on his folded arms.

"I don't believe you're so absolutely indifferent."

For a long time neither spoke. Each had a glass of grog in front of him. Each watched the lump of sugar dissolving in the glass.

"What else have you got to tell me?" Hanns asked after a while. His voice was stand-offish and hard.

"Nothing," Schickedanz said. "Except that I should like to see you sometimes."

"Come along and pay me a visit some day," Hanns said, with a suggestion of mockery in his voice.

"With pleasure," said Schickedanz. "I'm not like the others, you know."

They finished their grog and said good-bye.

A short time after Hanns had put on his ski again and was quietly ascending the hill. When he got to the third bend Johann Kaspar overtook him in the car and stopped.

"I say, Hanns," he called out, and his voice rang out sharply in the icy January air. "They're going to let her come home in ten days' time!"

It was evening. The varnish was dry. Hanns placed the cradle on the lathe and put pieces of wood under it to prevent its rocking while he painted. He tried drawing a pattern in pencil, but the clouds he drew looked heavy with an impending storm. "No," he said, "I won't do anything to frighten us." So he drew small, light clouds, bright and fleecy, with the Virgin Mary standing on them like a flower in May.

Next he began putting on the paint. Some dabs of violet, and a dream sky appeared. Hanns laid on a thick first coat of scarlet to form the border between heaven and earth. It was a grim scarlet.

The drawing on the cradle grew and grew. Here appeared a garden, and a black tree growing in an ochre field, and there a

flower, the calyx of which was a child's face. Here was an aeroplane flying over the sea, with the word "Courage" written on its wings. Here was a cornfield, and there the Neckar flowed between the meadows and a train disappeared into a tunnel and houses with red roofs and dark-blue balconies rose along the shore and tiny flags fluttered on all the hills round about, and from the yellow sun a streamer issued forth with the words "Our native land" on it. And close at hand vines rose in terraces upon a hillside, and there was the Lord God looking down through a small opening in the sky, with the words "I rejoice" underneath.

Hanns went on painting for hour after hour; till long after the fire had gone out in the stove and the cold crept in through the chinks. Then he stepped back and contemplated the Virgin Mary. She wore no crown. She carried no child in her arms. She was a woman heavy with child.

An icy January stillness rested over the city of Siebenwasser. The sky was deep-blue, and beneath it the land was covered with a blanket of snow.

Schickedanz chose the footpath. Every now and then he trod up to his knees in a snow-drift. It was a terrible path. Schickedanz sighed. He took off his broad-brimmed hat. He was dazzled by the light reflected on the snow. In his shabby overcoat and with his portfolio under his arm he felt ridiculous in the midst of this brilliant silence. The mansion glittered at the top of the hill. Schickedanz drew his brandy flask from his pocket and drank. Then he plodded on.

Schickedanz cursed the whole filthy business. Last night Hungrich had come to see him again.

Well? he had asked him. Did he think he had given him the hundred marks to buy drinks?

It didn't make any difference what I told the rat. I told him things were really going to happen now. And I was willing to pay the hundred marks back in monthly instalments. I read him a fine lecture. But he said a motor-cyclist would be waiting for me outside the Green Tree Inn at Weissenfels village at half-

past five. I've got to hand the letters over to him and he'll drive me to the station, where I've got to take the night-train to Frankfurt. I shall be told more tomorrow morning in Frankfurt at No. 1 office. And if you don't deliver the goods, we'll deal with you with the gloves off, my dear fellow, he said to me. Leave me alone, I yelled at him, and I said if he went on talking like that I'd simply report the whole thing. But he took me by the wrist and put his face quite close to mine and said: "Who'd believe you, you boozer?" and then he was gone.

Schickedanz stopped, out of breath. The snow-covered fields stretched before his eyes. Wouldn't it be fine to wallow in it until every speck of dirt was gone! He took another swill at his brandy flask.

For a long time Hanns had been wondering who was coming up the hill. It certainly wasn't a peasant, for no peasant walked like that. He couldn't help laughing at the comic figure. Perhaps it was a bailiff, or someone collecting for the home mission. He fetched Bäuerle's field-glasses from the cupboard and recognized Schickedanz.

Twenty minutes later Schickedanz reached the farm. He looked round him, with a friendly expression on his face. What does he want of me? Hanns wondered. Does he want to be on the safe side in case there are any changes coming, on account of Gerhard or something? Bäuerle said yesterday that Schleicher had fallen and that Hitler's turn was really coming now. That left me quite cold. Bäuerle strode solemnly up and down the room, asking what would become of Germany now. I said I didn't know. And I don't know. I don't take any interest in it any more. I just can't. All I care about is that Irene shall live.

Hanns went to meet Schickedanz, and led him into the hall. Schickedanz sat down and the snow melted from his shoes.

"You've no idea how well-off you are up here, my dear chap. This quiet is marvellous. Down in Siebenwasser it's just like a madhouse. Old Father Allwohn, for instance, hasn't had a meal for two days, out of the sheer excitement of waiting for what's going to happen in Berlin. At Mother Döring's they sit listening

to the radio till two o'clock in the morning, and the S.A. is on constant emergency duty and Hungrich—" Schickedanz bent forward—"has already started distributing revolvers."

"Would you prefer wine or brandy?" Hanns asked.

"If you've got any Moselle—" They went down to the cellar. Schickedanz gazed long at the vats.

"Good God," he said. "When I see all this I feel that the whole humbug can go on without me."

Affectionately he read the names on the bottles and reverently touched the dust. He pressed his ear against the great vats and listened. He lifted the earthenware jugs.

"And people drink brandy! Oh, well, I'm one of them myself!"

Later they sat in the hall and drank. Dark shadows already lay across the snow.

"Have you ever thought about Gerhard? You know what I mean?" Schickedanz said.

Hanns shook his head.

"I've never thought about it again."

"You really mean you never want to hear any more about it?"

"No," said Hanns.

"Not even if the thing happens now?"

"No."

"I quite understand. They treated you damned badly."

Schickedanz drank. He let the wine linger on his tongue. Then he drank again. Minute after minute passed in silence.

"How's the girl getting on?"

"Whom do you mean?" Hanns asked.

"You know, what's her name? Irene."

"She's having a baby!"

"What?"

Schickedanz forgot to shut his mouth and displayed his great yellow teeth. In the end he managed to get out the words "Good heavens alive, man!" and then emptied a full glass at one gulp.

"Is there anything else you'd like to know about me?" said Hanns with a smile.

"So you think I'm a spy?"

Schickedanz banged his fist on the table.

"Do you know what I really am?" he exclaimed. "I'm just a poor devil! Just a poor, miserable devil!"

He stared down at the floor, holding his head between his hands. His shoulders jerked convulsively. The sun sank behind the hill. The snow in the fields turned as grey as lead.

"I know you're not a spy, Schickedanz," Hanns said gently. "You're just a weak person. Like me. Like most of us."

Schickedanz raised his head. His hair hung over his forehead.

"You know nothing," he said. "It's far worse than you know."

At twilight they went into the farm and inspected the stalls. Hanns showed Schickedanz the cows. They helped feed them. Then they visited the dairy and the artesian well and inspected the threshing machines. Schickedanz couldn't see enough. They visited every corner of the estate. They climbed up to the loft in the granary where the corn lay and they let the dried grains trickle through their fingers. They went round the cellars, sampled the wine in the barrels and ate cheese with it. Last of all Hanns showed Schickedanz the cradle.

"Did you paint that?"

Hanns nodded.

"The sky and the sea and the tree and the children and the Almighty rejoicing in the vineyard?"

"Yes, I suddenly discovered I could do it," said Hanns. Schickedanz put his arm round him. "You're a lucky man!" he said. "You're right not to take any more notice of the outside world."

Hanns picked up the cradle.

"Are you coming?" he said. "I want to take it up to my room."

They went upstairs. Hanns unlocked his cupboard, put the cradle on the floor inside and covered it with two of his shirts.

While shifting the things about he put his little box on the table.

"What have you got there?" asked Schickedanz.

"Oh, just some old letters. There are a few from Gerhard, and a photograph of my father."

He unlocked the box and took out his father's portrait.

"How old was he when he fell?" Schickedanz asked.

"Thirty-eight."

Captain Diefenbach looked at his son. Hanns closed the box. "Irene's coming home in four days," he said.

Schickedanz suddenly grew very talkative. Hanns had fetched bread and wine. They sat at the table, eating and drinking. The small stove hissed gently, and outside it grew dark.

"If Jürgen knew what was happening he'd jump out of his grave," Schickedanz declared. "They're sitting in Berlin at this very moment, negotiating with the Conservatives and Big Business. The whole thing's going to be perfectly nauseating. Just you wait till they've all got their fat jobs. Then it'll be farewell, all ye poor vulgar wretches. I tell you Kalahne will be a minister yet! Do you know what that fellow can do? He can lie without telling an untruth!

"It's like this," Schickedanz went on, lifting his head. "If I've got a piece of wood and hold it under a green light, I can say with perfect truth that it's green, can't I? And if I shine a blue light on the other side of it, I can say with perfect truth that it's blue. But in reality it's grey. And that's what it's going to be like with Germany. That's exactly what it's going to be like!"

Hanns smiled. He saw how drunk Schickedanz was and felt the man could not help talking like this, entirely without caution or restraint. Was this the reason why he came to see me?

"Clear out of the country!" Schickedanz said suddenly. "Clear out of it! Bäuerle's got factories in America, hasn't he? What are you doing here? They let us—youth, that is—have a sniff at a little Socialism, just to stir us all up, but in the end it'll only be the old sergeant-major kicking us in the pants again. If Jürgen came back from the grave in two years' time, I tell you he'd pop back again the same second! I don't mind giving it to you in writing!"

Schickedanz went on drinking. He drank quite recklessly. His eyes grew glazed and red and his face was chalk-white.

"I never open my mouth any more," he said. "I just go on drinking and in the end I'll die."

Hanns left the room to fetch some coffee. When he came back Schickedanz was lying with his head on the table, asleep. Hanns tapped him on the shoulder and he looked up.

"Have you been crying?" Hanns asked. Schickedanz stared glassily at the cup of coffee Hanns placed before him.

"It comes over me sometimes in my sleep, you know—the whole misery of it."

He drank the coffee in one gulp.

"What's the time?"

"Twenty-past five."

Schickedanz rose to his feet.

"I must go," he said. "I'm on night duty."

Hanns helped him on with his coat. He felt sorry for him because he was so unhappy.

At the door Schickedanz stopped.

"May I see the cradle again?" he asked.

Hanns fetched the cradle and put it on the table.

Schickedanz looked at the trees, the children, the river, the vineyards and the smiling representation of the Almighty. He stepped closer. He started rocking the cradle with his little finger.

"Whoever sleeps in that'll be lucky," he said, as he went. "He'll at least start at the beginning."

Three hours later Faulstroh, journalist on the staff of the Social-Democratic *People's Rights,* at last had an opportunity of proving that his connections with disaffected sections of the S.A. could be of use. He flung a packet of letters down on the table before his colleagues' astonished eyes. "There you are! That's got the fellow's morals fixed at any rate!"

Hanns had come down to Siebenwasser in the morning. He was sitting in the Blue Bear Inn, waiting for his meal. He was going to take the twelve-thirty train to Heidelberg. Bäuerle had telephoned and asked him to bring rugs and blankets and a foot-muff for Irene. Hanns was happy. Tomorrow he would sit next to Irene in the car and tell her all about Weissenfels and the cradle he had made.

Hanns looked up. It was a grey day. Outside in the street the rain came drizzling down. It was thawing, and every now and then wet lumps of snow slid down from the roofs. It struck eleven. The chimes of St. Andrew's always gave Hanns a great feeling of peace. The time the telegram came and his mother collapsed in the kitchen and he knew his father was dead the chimes had suddenly rung out, echoing gravely and earnestly over the rooftops, and the child standing by his unconscious mother's side had bowed to their solemn ringing. Later, when they confirmed him, the bells had rung too. Their sound had accompanied him through all the stages of his life. They were quite close above him now. The tower that enclosed them was in the square just yonder, and if Hanns looked up he could see the heavy clapper swinging.

The bells stopped ringing. The sound of music and singing could be heard coming from the Lower Town, approaching in firm, steady rhythm. Hanns heard the old songs, sung by a hundred throats, swelling among the houses. The people rushed out into the streets. Surely that was Henri Jockel over there outside the window; and wasn't that his wife, Minchen? They held small paper pennants with swastikas on them, and round them were many laughing people, carrying flags. Hanns looked away. He sat in the restaurant alone, feeling damp and cold, and the music came nearer and nearer. How well he knew that march. How well he knew it. Suddenly it was quite close to him. He heard a deafening roar of "Heil!" and turned his head and saw the Standard, and when they drew up outside the window he couldn't help standing up. He gazed dumbly at the frenzied crowd, saw the fluttering of banners, and the arms raised stiffly in salute and he saw Hungrich, with his shoulder-strap, marching in front.

Mounted police were riding across the square when he sat down again. Hanns looked at the clock. Where was his lunch? He had ordered boiled beef, and the waiter had said that it would be ready in a few minutes. Hanns stood up. No one was at the counter, and the kitchen was empty too. Everybody was in the street. The fire was glimmering in the hearth and looked as if it were going out.

Hanns felt cold. He sat down again at the table, alone. His

red wine tasted flat. If only Henrici or Bäuerle were here. Would they be carrying the Standard to Dern's house now, and would his mother be standing by the front door, waiting to make obeisance before it? And after that they will wait and go on waiting until the sign comes. And then they will sing and rejoice and call out that now Germany belongs to them.

Suddenly Hanns started. What was this? People were forming into little groups in the street. Henri Jockel was standing right in front of the window, reading a newspaper, with many people pressing round him. What on earth was he reading? How evil all their eyes looked suddenly. They looked quite sinister. Had he not been elected Chancellor after all? What was the matter with the waiter? He touched Henri Jockel's arm and whispered something to him. Suddenly Henri Jockel stared in at the window. The man had gone quite white in the face. What's this? He's beckoning to me. *What* does he want me to do? He's pointing to the floor. He's mad. He wants me to duck, hide myself. He must be drunk. I shake my head. What on earth is the matter with you, my dear sir? You're going purple in the face. Are you all right? Good God, the man's pulling down the green shutters in front of my window, just as if it were summer, and now he's left me sitting here in the dark.

Hanns picked up his glass to drink. His hand was trembling. He felt a hand on his shoulder. Henri Jockel took him by the arm. "Come along!" he said. "Quickly!" and pulled him along between the white tables, along the corridor and into his office. He locked the door and collapsed on to a chair. "My heart!" he panted. "Oh, my heart!" Hanns was just going to his assistance, but Henri Jockel sprang to his feet and pushed the boy back against the wall. "Don't move!" he exclaimed. "Or I'll forget myself!" And before Hanns had time to answer or ask what he meant Henri Jockel came quite close to him and whispered, hissed in his ear:

"Let me tell you if Bäuerle weren't a friend of my youth, so to speak, and a good customer into the bargain, I'd have kicked you out of the house long ago, you dirty little swine."

Hanns seized the man and forced him to the floor. "What are you getting at?" he shouted hoarsely. Henri Jockel struggled but didn't succeed in rising to his feet. After a minute's silent wrestling he seemed to quiet down. "Listen," he said, looking into Hanns's eyes. "For the sake of old times, when you were still a decent lad, I'll give you one piece of good advice: if you value your life disappear from Siebenwasser today. It was lucky I was the only one to see you behind that window, otherwise the whole place would have been smashed to pieces by now. Do you understand me now?"

Hanns looked at the perspiring man.

"No," he said. "I don't."

"You don't understand?" said Henri Jockel with a shrill, piercing laugh. "Playing the little innocent, are you?" He made a gesture with his head towards the table. "Have a look at that!" he said. "There it is in black and white!"

Hanns reached the table in a bound and unfolded the wet newspaper.

Out of the Brown Cesspool:
Prophet of the New Germany Revealed in his True Colours
"See that you don't smell of girls when I come back!"

Never in his life had Henri Jockel heard such a shriek as rent the air at that moment. It was as shrill, as unreal, as if a man's flesh were being torn from his body. Then the door slammed and suddenly there was a fearful silence. Minchen came dashing into the office and found her husband sitting on the floor with his hands to his ears. His lips were white.

Run. Go on running. There were still some houses and still some voices behind him. That was a stone right in the small of the back. Go on, go on. He stumbled and fell. That was a blow with a stick. He got up and went on running, on and on. The houses were getting rarer and rarer. Snow, white snow appeared ahead of him, and the wood beyond.

After passing the last house he realized that the pursuit had

ceased. Then he heard a whistle, and a voice call out: "Run away and die like a dog!" And then once more: "Run away and die like a dog!"

He ran up the path. His breath came in gasps. His head was a fiery furnace. When he reached the pavilion it struck twelve o'clock. He laughed. It was furious, abandoned laughter. "Schickedanz," he laughed. "You filthy scum!" He stood still. He felt a fearful nausea. Down below in the valley he heard the whistle of a train. "Irene!" Hanns called out. He collapsed to the ground and screamed.

When he got up again the train was just entering the first tunnel. The smoke hung over the fields for a long time, then disappeared in the folds of the hill. Hanns listened. No sound but that of snow falling gently from the branches came from the wood. The clouds sank lower and lower into the valley.

Hanns walked on, putting one foot before the other like a child. It was as though he had forgotten how to walk during the chase through the town and up the hill. Cautiously he held on to tree-trunks to help himself along. The fiery furnace inside his head had gone, but in its place there was a bright, airy emptiness which made him feel so light that it seemed he must hold on tight in order not to fly away. When he reached the seven streams he stopped. He heard the water flowing beneath its covering of snow—the blood of the seven knights who died here fighting against the Huns. Hanns bent down and plunged his arm through the snow until he felt the rippling water. And as the water flowed through his fingers he knew beyond any doubt that nothing would happen to Irene. He just knew it positively and for certain. And in his mind's eye he saw the child as well.

That's all I want to know, he said, and rose to his feet. Little else remained for him to do. Another five hundred paces and he would be at Weissenfels. He walked the five hundred paces, calm and serious, as if he were coming back from work. As he entered the farm he heard the cows lowing. He smiled. What luck they've got, he said to himself. They've got no souls. He opened the cupboard in his room. The box had been broken open. Only his

father's photograph remained. He put it in his pocket. Then he fetched the cradle. He placed it beside him and started rocking it. He went on rocking it for a long time. Then he rose to his feet. The revolver, a present from Gerhard, lay in the top drawer of the wash-stand. He put it in his pocket. He wrote a note and fastened it to the cradle, next to the Virgin Mary. "For you, Irene," were the words on the note. Then he took a rope, sat down on the chair and tied himself to it. He talked to his father. "I don't know where you are," he said gently, "but I've got your heart. It's a simple one. And the fact that it's a well-meaning one isn't sufficient. Nowadays it just isn't sufficient." Suddenly he picked up the photograph and tore it to shreds. "I could go on living if I wanted to," he said aloud, "but it's too disgusting." He picked up the revolver. A sudden cry came from the farm below. It was Fräulein Degerloch, splashing her way through the puddles. What was it she was yelling? Oh, I see. So he has become Chancellor. Somebody has become Chancellor. He couldn't help laughing. But suddenly he laughed no longer. The bells were ringing. The bells of St. Andrew's. The bells of St. Andrew's again. And other bells rang out too, all the other bells, from the village and from the hills and from the valley. Thanks. Thanks.

He sat bolt upright, raised the revolver, called out: "Good-bye, Irene!" and pulled the trigger.

The pealing of the bells was so loud that nobody heard the shot. Their clangour rang out across the land. They seemed to be ringing the world into another sphere.

CHAPTER X

JOHANN KASPAR drove through the night. The sky was clear and the stars scintillated in the river. Johann Kaspar stared calmly ahead into the white glow cast by the headlights. Trees flashed by and damp snow plopped on the roof of the car. Flags were flying in all the villages through which he passed, and the inns seemed nearly bursting with joyful song.

But all Bäuerle saw was Irene, lying on her bed, overcome with weeping, gentle, almost inaudible weeping, like a light being put out. She had waited for four hours. She had spent four hours gazing towards the garden gate. But Hanns had not come and Weissenfels was dumb. Yes, Weissenfels was dumb. There was no reply. The telephone buzzed and buzzed but there was no reply.

Was she asleep by now? Bäuerle wondered. Had the injection worked? Or was she still crying—perhaps actually crying in her sleep? How pale the doctor had been. Johann Kaspar had talked to him in the specialist's room at the nursing home, while outside pipes played and drums beat. "We must be prepared for anything," the doctor said. Did he mean Germany or Irene?

Bäuerle left the nursing home and was nearly suffocated in the tumultuous throng that swallowed him up. He struggled through the waves of people like a shipwrecked mariner. He saw jubilant groups of students, and rapturous women, and heard men's shouts. They shouted one thing only. "Heil!" "Heil!" "Heil!" Suddenly they burst into song. They sang, and not one of them differed from another either in voice or gesture. It was a tumult, a raging tumult through which he had to pass. He must get through. He must get through. That was his only thought.

Not till he was in the garage, under the feeble electric light, was he able to think clearly again. In this hour, with the ground opening beneath his feet, he felt there was nothing for him but the truth, naked and undisguised. He summoned up all his strength. He would drive to Weissenfels. He would enter the silent house and find out why Hanns had not come and why Irene's labour had begun. He felt as if anything that happened to him was bound to affect Germany too, so close was Germany to his heart.

Calmly and coldly he drove along the winding road. He drove through the villages with their waving flags. How they fluttered in the breeze! He had never seen the country as it was that day.

He passed through Erlenbach and drove round the hill and Siebenwasser met his eyes. The town was brilliantly illuminated. Through the midst of it, a torchlight procession was making its way. Bäuerle dashed down the hill right into the tumult. He wanted to penetrate it, force his way into it, find out what was behind all this frenzy. Shortly before the inner city gate his car was stopped by police—pale-faced men anxiously shrieking their instructions, servants of a State that was going up in flames like a wisp of straw. Suddenly the frenzy was all round him. Here they were, with music—strident bugles and trumpets and drums and then again drums. Thousands were coming along behind them. Youth who gave obedience, blind, implicit obedience to this man, whose name they were shouting, as though he had in his hands all the world's bounty to distribute. Bäuerle got out of his car. He was carried along in the crowd. The singing blared forth into the night and the torches blazed and there was shouting and jubilation, and accompanying it all the firm footsteps of the marching columns.

A clamour filled the market-place, where a throng was densely packed, head to head, shoulder to shoulder. Bäuerle looked upon the people from whom he sprang. They were singing and rejoicing, throwing freedom away, each of them sacrificing his own will, sinking back into the mire and being pleased about it. Suddenly a hush came over the multitude. A searchlight was turned

on. Trumpets and bugles ceased, and only a drum went on beating, rat-a-tat-tat, rat-a-tat-tat. It went on beating the same reiterant rhythm. Dern appeared in the ray of the searchlight, mounting the steps of St. Andrew's Church, surrounded by flags.

Bäuerle was horror-stricken. He wanted to spring forward, point to the ignoble features of this man standing before the vaults of the saints and shout aloud to the people that they were being led astray, that their longings were being exploited by false prophets. But Dern took the flag and lifted it on high. It fluttered in the night breeze. The shadows swayed this way and that. Dern's voice rang out across the market-place, and a jubilant clamour came in answer.

Victory! Germany is ours!

All the lights were out at Weissenfels. Stables and house lay in darkness. Only the gentle rays of the moon lay across garden and roof.

Bäuerle crossed the farm and went to the servants' house. He banged the door with his fist. A hollow echo down the passage was the only answer. Bäuerle opened the door and went upstairs. The rooms were empty. Beer bottles and the remnants of a meal were on the table. Sounds of snoring broke the silence. The snoring came from a box-room. Bäuerle opened the wooden door. It was old Brandeis, lying among a lot of sacks and milk-pails, fast asleep. Bäuerle shook him and woke him up.

"Where are the others?" he called out.

Old Brandeis, overcome with brandy and sleep, started whimpering and whining. It wasn't his fault, he said. He couldn't help it. A man had come on a bicycle about six o'clock and said there were going to be victory celebrations at Siebenwasser, and they had all dashed off, and Fräulein Degerloch had gone too.

"Did they *all* go?" asked Bäuerle, dragging the old man under the light. The old man was trembling and dribbling at the mouth.

Bäuerle said nothing. Suddenly old Brandeis pointed towards the electric light and whispered "Turn it out!" Bäuerle put out the light. He felt the old man taking his hand in the dark, and

he let him lead him and made no answer when the old man said:

"Sh! We're in the presence of death!"

Bäuerle looked out the window, with the old servant next to him. Outside the walls cast no shadow. "Look over there!" the old man said. Bäuerle looked.

Through a window on the first floor of the annexe Bäuerle saw a head. It lay on the window ledge, as though asleep. The hair gleamed in the gentle light of the moon. The eyes were open and they gleamed too.

"He's been lying like that for five hours. I kept calling to him, but he went on lying there and didn't move!"

Bäuerle was silent for a long time. He watched the shadows grow. Wall after wall disappeared into the shadow.

The two men went upstairs. They untied the body from the chair. They found the cradle and the newspaper. When they tried to lift him to lay him on the bed they found the left cheek was frozen to the window ledge. The two men knelt and tried to melt the ice with their warm breath.

Irene saw Hanns after all. It was behind Erlenbach. He was climbing the slope. It wasn't winter any more, because the grass was growing. Hanns didn't look round. He didn't hear, however loud she called. She began running and waving to him, but he went on climbing higher and higher. Soon he would be getting to where the wood began, and she cried out: "Don't go into the wood! Don't go into the wood!" and ran uphill behind him. She was soon exhausted and out of breath. She fell in the grass and got wet, but Hanns kept on towards the wood. It wasn't an ordinary wood, but consisted of black trees stretching right up to the sky. Knotty growths hung from the branches, and there was blood on the thorns of the bushes. She screamed when she saw that. Suddenly she found Kilian Kern by her side. He unbuckled his leg and used it to strike a bell his wife was carrying. Father was there too, with his friend Dr. Baker from Baltimore, and both of them were calling out too, but Hanns didn't hear. Then it came over her. She must save him and hold him fast. The child within

her was too heavy, it kept dragging her down to earth again. But she could stand it no longer, she could no longer bear to see Hanns approaching nearer and nearer to the bloody thorns. Kilian Kern shouted: "Don't go into the wood! Don't go into the wood!" but Hanns kept straight on, so she laid violent hands upon her body and drew forth the child within her and there was blood, oh! so much blood, and there were flames of fire and a thousand knives that came to stab and stab again. But she could run now, she could run much faster, she could fly and she caught up with him. "I've thrown it away!" she panted, "I've thrown it away!" and she was about to embrace him, but as she stretched forth her hands there appeared a tree which cast its branches about her, and suddenly she found herself in the middle of the wood, caught up in the tops of the trees, and she could see Hanns walking barefoot through the soft grass in the valley below. Yonder were the seven brooks, she could see the sparkling water, and Hanns lay down and sparkling water from the spring fell on his white breast.

How ardent was the yearning that overcame her then. She struggled desperately to free herself from the branches and jump down, but the branches held her and she could not get free. "Hanns!" she shrieked. "I'm caught, I can't get out!" But Hanns did not hear. He lay in the shade and stretched himself. He smiled and stretched his limbs, and his limbs grew brighter and brighter and suddenly they changed altogether. They turned to water and suddenly a lot of brooks began to flow, and soon there was nothing where Hanns had been but a network of silvery veins flowing among the green grass. Then the sky darkened for a second and many birds came flying and they sprinkled their downy throats with water and many flowers grew on the banks and their petals were filled with pearly drops.

But Irene, up in the treetops, twisted and writhed and struggled, but the branches would not let her go. She was held fast. They would not let her go.

The girl on the bed still writhed and shrieked. Two doctors were standing over her. In the corner of the room the nurse was

rocking the baby in her arms. It was three o'clock at night and dreams were starting to lift men's masks.

They buried Hanns in the village cemetery. It was a bright February day. The earth shone yellow under the flowers. Three men followed the bier—Holzapfel, Bäuerle and Kilian Kern. The priest spoke a few hurried and embarrassed words. A cold wind blew dust over the cemetery walls and fluttered the ribbons of the old women staring through the cemetery railings. The three men continued to stand at the graveside for a long time. Every now and then one of them bent down and carefully smoothed the earth of the hillside. Then, after bowing in silence, they left the cemetery. Women whispered after them as they went and children stared at them round-eyed. Pigeons, standing out white against the blue sky, circled round the church spire, and trumpets and bugle-notes sounded from a parade in Siebenwasser.

They went home with Bäuerle and sat and drank till evening came. They spoke but little, but Kilian Kern suddenly said that he was on the trail. Faulstroh, of the *People's Rights,* had hanged himself, and Schickedanz had been at the estate only two hours before he disappeared. Bäuerle silenced him with a gesture. His pain was too great for him to thirst for retribution. He sat still, staring dry-eyed at the cradle, with the picture of the Almighty gazing down smilingly upon the vines, and the words "I rejoice" underneath.

Irene's life hung in the balance for many weeks. The scarlet hue of fever lay upon her cheeks. She laughed and sang. She embraced her pillow and called it Hanns. Whenever a band passed by in the street she asked whether they were bringing him. They had stolen him, but in the end he would escape. He had fled into the fairy wood, and they were looking for him everywhere at this very moment, because they couldn't live without his soul. They would have to go on searching for his soul for a thousand years. That was the doom the Almighty had laid on them, because they persecuted love.

Bäuerle sat at the nursing home all day long, waiting to know whether Irene would succeed in overcoming death. He did not remonstrate with fate. He walked in silence through the jubilant streets. All round him he heard his native speech, but he no longer understood it. He had lost Germany on the night he found Hanns dead. Germany lay buried in the soil of Weissenfels—a youth with large, questioning eyes. Those who still lived, the boys and the youths in the marching columns, no longer confronted life with questioning eyes. They did not know the beauty of doubt. They marched and they sang. The nation was awake, but the individual had perished.

The Reichstag fire took place, the elections swept the old State away. The S.A. stormed the town hall. They dragged Schrader through the streets. They dressed him in a sheepskin and put a dunce's cap and bells on his head. When they told him to dance in front of all the people, and Hungrich himself played the tambourine to accompany him, Schrader merely stood still and smiled. He smiled at the Germans, as a child might smile. He smiled as though he no longer knew them. Hungrich smashed his spectacles, but Schrader went on smiling and blinking short-sightedly, with the blood running down his cheeks. And men and women and children held their sides with laughter at Schrader's helplessness. When the vicar of St. Andrew's appealed for mercy for the unfortunate man, using the words "In the name of Jesus Christ," Hungrich laughed at him. "Rubbish!" he called out. "We've got the power now!"

They took Schrader to the brickyard, where many others were already confined. S.A. guards were on duty there and Hungrich was in command. Dern took up his quarters in the town hall, where Kalahne received him in state. Kalahne and Dern were surrounded by jubilation and tumult. They went out on the balcony and swore faith to the people. In April, Kalahne went to Berlin, where greater tasks awaited him, and then Dern ruled supreme in Siebenwasser. He had Jews dragged through the streets as though they were strange animals, but Aschaffenburg, with

much grinding of teeth, he was compelled to let alone. For Aschaffenburg came back from Berlin with a letter from the Minister for Economic Affairs in the face of which Dern could do nothing. But he laid his hands on Dr. Wachtel. Dr. Wachtel was only a professional man and he did not own a store which suddenly turned out to be of national importance. Moreover, Wachtel had a head nurse. For four years the good woman had carefully noted every word and every sentence that Wachtel uttered against the Party. Now he was presented with the bill, and it was a bill of impressive proportions. Dr. Wachtel had been very careless. Had he been a good official and held his tongue he would have been able to prove that he had never had any political opinions at all. This was what everybody else now hastened to do. As it was, he was driven publicly through the streets with a cow-bell round his neck, and made to call out: "I am a Jew! I am a Jew!" Until a few days previously he had not known he was a Jew, but they had discovered he had a Jewish grandfather who was only baptized at the age of thirty. Dr. Wachtel marched through the gaping throng with the cow-bell ringing and a man beating a drum in front of him and the German sky smiling ingenuously down on him, and his former patients vanished rapidly behind the doorways to avoid having to join him and shout too. Dr. Wachtel called out: "I am a Jew! I am a Jew!" ever louder and louder, until in the end there was actually triumph in his voice.

The months passed and Irene recovered. One evening Bäuerle came and took her back to Weissenfels. It was May and the first flowers were in bloom in the garden. During the months of convalescence they never spoke of Hanns. But sometimes she looked at him for a moment, silently, and he saw that she was weeping. She knew. She bent over her child. It was a boy. She held it in her arms. Death, which had grazed her with its wings, had made her strong. One evening at sunset they left the estate and went silently to the cemetery, and she knelt before the grave until night came with its stars. After that she walked with Bäuerle through the fields for a long time. The fragrance of spring lay over the

countryside and the swallows darted to and fro like black shadows in the farm-yards. Under the copper-beech at the cross-roads Irene suddenly stopped still.

"When do we leave?"

"As soon as I've settled everything," Johann Kaspar said.

The *Braunschweig* had fine weather when she left. The passengers had long since gone below. A cool September wind swept over the North Sea. Bands were playing in the saloon and dining-room. Bäuerle stood near the bow of the vessel, among the ropes and winches. The shore grew dimmer and dimmer in the evening light. Tears coursed down his cheeks. He still loved this country, but now he tore himself away.

As he entered Irene's cabin she was busy with the child. It lay pink and naked on the sheets.

"What's that?" asked Bäuerle, pointing to a small bag which hung from the child's neck like a charm.

"Earth," said Irene. "A little earth from home."